



HENRIETTA SANDS MERRICK

SPOKEN IN TIBET

By

HENRIETTA SANDS MERRICK

Author of "In the World's Attic"



With 29 Illustrations and Map

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To

FRANK J. HOGAN

PREFACE

IT had the contrasts I love . . . this journey into Tibet. Over a week in the air; sea level in burning heat, and blizzards at altitudes of over fifteen thousand feet; the beauty of tropical forests, and the desolation of vast steppes; a haunted bungalow in the jungle, and feasts with the great nobles of Tibet; life among strange people with stranger customs; contacts and experiences all new and strange, that stimulated a keen "awareness" that made life vivid and worth while.

I have been asked why I, who by choice make my home in a New York apartment, should care to travel in such a desolate land. Tibet is one of the wonder places of the world. In these days, when women share so many of the opportunities men have to make life more interesting, it seems natural that some should be drawn to that land of mystery.

In a lifetime, I shall not forget the thrill of climbing to the heights of the Jelep-Là in the Himalaya, and actually "descending" into the highest land in the world. Life is swept clean of its usual interests, up there, where one looks across wide tablelands to towering snow mountains, that spread in

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splendid pageant across the horizon. The aloneness is never loneliness.

And I liked, too, to battle against a high wind, to warm frost-bitten hands over a campfire, to sleep on rough cots, to be tired and hungry and uncomfortable . . . and with it all to feel so well and so carefree. I liked the comradeship of my Tibetan servants when we gathered together for the storytelling hour; I liked to care for them and to feel their gratitude.

As I had crossed the Himalaya from both the Eastern and the Western ends, I was eligible for membership in the Himalayan Club. Until 1931, the year that I was elected, this privilege was denied to women. Looking over the annual list of members for 1932, that begins with the name ABRUZZI, S. A. R. Il Principe Luigi Emedeo di Savoia Duca Degli, and ends with YOUNGHUSBAND, Lieut.-Colonel Sir Francis, K. C. S. I., K. C. I. E., I find myself the only woman member. And I rejoice that I am the first woman to have the privilege of fellowship with those who, in their efforts to pave the way for others to the high snows, have done great feats of mountain climbing and exploring.

How much of Peace will be found in those high places I can best describe by quoting a letter recently received from the Bunty of my story, who wrote to me about the dire effects of the depression in India and Tibet. A sentence broke off suddenly

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with a dash, then continued . . . “I looked up just then and saw the whole Kangchenjunga range ablaze in the sunshine. What difference do such things make in the face of that!”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks are due to Mr. J. G. Acheson, Deputy Secretary for the Government of India, for having paved the way for this journey into Tibet, and to Colonel Weir, Political Officer, Sikkim, for having granted me the permit.

The interest and helpful suggestions of Sir Francis Younghusband followed me along the trail, which he blazed in 1904, and greatly encouraged me on the journey. For the introduction to him I am indebted to His Excellency the British Ambassador at Washington, Sir Ronald Lindsay, and to Doctor La Gorce, Vice-President of the National Geographic Society.

Captain E. W. Fletcher, British Trade Agent, Gyantse, and Mr. O. McL. Martin, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling, aided my journey in every way. And I am likewise indebted to Colonel H. W. Tobin, D.S.O., Secretary of the Himalayan Club, and to Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Perry for their interest and helpfulness.

Without the aid of Mrs. Norman Odling, the

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“Bunty” of my story, I could not have got my bandobast together at all. I owe to her the fact that I made the journey attended by faithful servants.

H. S. M.

NOTE

ACCORDING to the terms of my permit to make this journey into Tibet, the manuscript had first to be submitted to the authorities of the Government of India.

It is with their permission that it is published. Such paragraphs as they felt would give serious offense to the government of Tibet have been deleted.

H. S. M.

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CHAPTER I

IN SPITE OF . . .

“**B**UT you can't go to Tibet! It will never be permitted!”

I sat across the desk from the man in Washington who was better informed about conditions in Tibet than any one in America. He continued: “You're crazy to contemplate such a thing . . . you, a woman!”

When I informed him that I had already been five hundred miles across the Himalaya he seemed surprised, but said that he felt it to be his duty to point out the insurmountable obstacles to such a journey because of the particularly acute political situation along the border at that moment; that there was danger of war between Nepal and Tibet, and he felt that my capture might bring about serious international complications.

I argued the fact that I would go at my own risk, and that the British authorities did not assume responsibility for travelers, and that a woman going in alone and unheralded, as I intended to, would be a very different thing from a large force that would surely be advertised, and might complicate

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matters by wandering off the prescribed route, or by using up the meager resources of the country.

He told me then of a man whom he had personally known, who had lived among the Tibetans, tending them in illness, and so endearing himself to them that they asked what return they might make for his kindness. He had requested that they procure for him an invitation to visit Lhasa. When it arrived he started out, was captured and tortured, and, when released, was brought back to America to be patched up, but returned to Tibet as soon as he was well again, and was then murdered.

I confess that he succeeded in frightening me. But I had had considerable experience traveling in India and knew that it was virtually impossible for any one but the authorities actually on the spot to know of conditions in any given locality. Changes occur sometimes with startling rapidity along the borders; the reason why such permits as I sought were obtainable only from the local authorities, with whom I happened at that time to be in touch, and to whom I had applied for a permit to enter and travel in Tibet. I recalled how very simple of accomplishment I had found certain things that, from rumors throughout India, had appeared difficult; and this encouraged me, but it was hard to convince one who felt that the chance was less reasonable than it seemed to me.

IN SPITE OF . . .

I have his permission to quote the letter he wrote me after my return to New York, and do so because it gives the prevailing impression that is held, even in India, that Tibet is still altogether isolated and inaccessible for the traveler in all of its parts. For the one route that I traversed, however, permits are obtainable from the Political Officer of Sikkim, and by him given only to the few who are known to the authorities, and whose adherence to the stipulated guarantees they can count on:

“I am perhaps stepping out of the beaten path of polite contact in again mentioning the hazards of a Tibetan journey, not only because of the personal dangers involved, but because of the extremely delicate political situation in that part of the world, and the embarrassment that it would cause in official circles should anything happen. I am fully convinced of your personal courage and your discounting of such hazards, but have you or any other American the right to precipitate what might be a matter involving many lives to gratify a personal ambition?

“If you should secure permission to go in, or entered without official permission, and anything happened, the British government would have to send in a column to do what was possible for you and that such a relief expedition would cause a considerable loss of life, there is little doubt.”

That thought gave me pause.

I was going merely to gratify a personal ambi-

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tion, and certainly I did not wish to be responsible for loss of life or international complications. But I believed that if I succeeded in obtaining a permit it would indicate that the venture involved only ordinary risks, and the person who likes to travel in out-of-the-way places is prepared to take them.

I have gone unarmed across several frontier passes in India protected by something more formidable than arms . . . British prestige. In the most remote places that have come under British influence, if not actually under the British flag, a certain regard for law and order and a respect for the white race prevails. This is true despite the disorders in India and along the frontier, for the situation is controlled by a mere handful of British soldiers. I felt that I had every reason to trust my luck wherever British influence prevailed.

My Luck! Why, I bore a charmed life! Time after time I had proved it. I recalled the occasion when I had exchanged a railroad ticket on a mere whim, and the train I did not take was telescoped.

And again! I was passenger on the first ship that sailed after the sinking of the *Lusitania*. It seemed a bit of a risk to my friends, but the needs of the moment required that I go to Paris, and the unforgettable memories that were crowded into the voyage compensated for the nerve-strain. . . . Blanketed portholes; a night spent on deck beside

IN SPITE OF . . .

our lifebelts while the danger zone was traversed; wonderful human contacts!

Another time I was the only woman out of six passengers who made the journey from France to New York on the first vessel to put out from any port after the Germans declared a renewal of their submarine warfare in the spring of 1916. Then there was periscope-hunting; watching the horizon for a trail of smoke that might herald the approach of the *Moeve*, still at large and raiding the seas. There was conversation that ranged wide between those who traveled for special and important interests; and experiences were recounted that made the journey of the moment seem almost tame.

After an interval of years I booked another passage; that time for the return journey from India via Imperial Airways, after my first visit there. I arrived in port ready for the flight, to find myself debarred because I had not been inoculated for plague. No time remained for that formality, and I hurried home by boat from Bombay, and learned while en route that the airship I had booked passage on had been lost with all hands on board, in Genoa Bay.

Clearly it was safe for me to hitch my wagon to a star!

What concerned me most was my ability to make the grade, to negotiate trails which I conceived to be worse than those crossed on my former journey

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across the Himalaya from Kashmir, or to stand for weeks altitudes considerably higher than any I had successfully achieved. I recalled another letter I had received from the beloved writer, L. Adams Beck, who had lived so many years in India. It was written shortly before her death in January, 1931, in answer to my announced intention of going to Tibet, a plan that would prevent my joining her in Japan. She advised me to read "Three Years in Tibet" by the Buddhist abbot Kawaguchi, who saw it as it is, devoid of the romance of Roerich and yet with the spirit of its own that no other country has rivaled. Mrs. Adams Beck emphasized the strength of mind and body that one required even to dream of such an adventure, saying that she knew what it was to travel in the high mountains.

I read Kawaguchi and shuddered at the picture he gave of Tibet and the Tibetans, but the urge to travel in that mysterious country was not checked; yet stop signals seemed to be set on every side. The doors to a wider life seemed to be closing against me, and

"I want to live, live out, not wobble through
My life somehow and then into the dark."

To go on day after day as I was then doing was unthinkable. My life was cramped into well-ordered ruts. I was tethered to little things. Even

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the thinking of my world was so well-regulated by habit that Heaven itself seemed to require a ticket of admission.

Fog had blanketed New York for many days. The river view from my library window was wiped out. Arched bridges showed like faint curving lines, and river craft, unseen, made their presence known by warning shrieks as they passed the treacherous currents of Hell Gate. Hours dragged. I lit the logs in my fireplace and watched the shadows play over book-lined walls.

About me were souvenirs of many a far country; the things a globe-trotter accumulates and cherishes for the memories they evoke. They spoke to me of days above the arctic circle; of lazy days along the Nile; of the beauty of deep forests; of the vivid life of Eastern bazaars. I could shut my eyes and hear the unforgettable notes of a flute breaking through the hush of a tropical night, or the steady beat of tom-toms. The liquid voice of the East was calling me: "Mem-sahib! Mem-sahib!"

"And hazy lazy hours of life
Just breathing air;
One couldn't ask much less . . . no strife,
Peace everywhere."

Why did they keep coming to me, those loved Songs of the Outlands, filling me with unrest and longing! Always before me was the vision of the

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Himalaya, which, once they have held one in their grip, will call and call, for they hold one in "the bond that shall last till the crows turns white and the glaciers melt."

A log fell forward in the fireplace and I suddenly became conscious of motor horns honking; of steel rivets being driven into the framework of a building close by, and into my brain also it seemed. I heard the rumble of distant elevated trains, the pulsing life of a great city that knows no rest. Just then the telephone bell rang and with joy I listened to the reading of a cable from Calcutta:

"Political officer, Sikkim, has authorized your visit to Tibet under conditions outlined in a sealed envelope addressed to you. Shall we forward?"

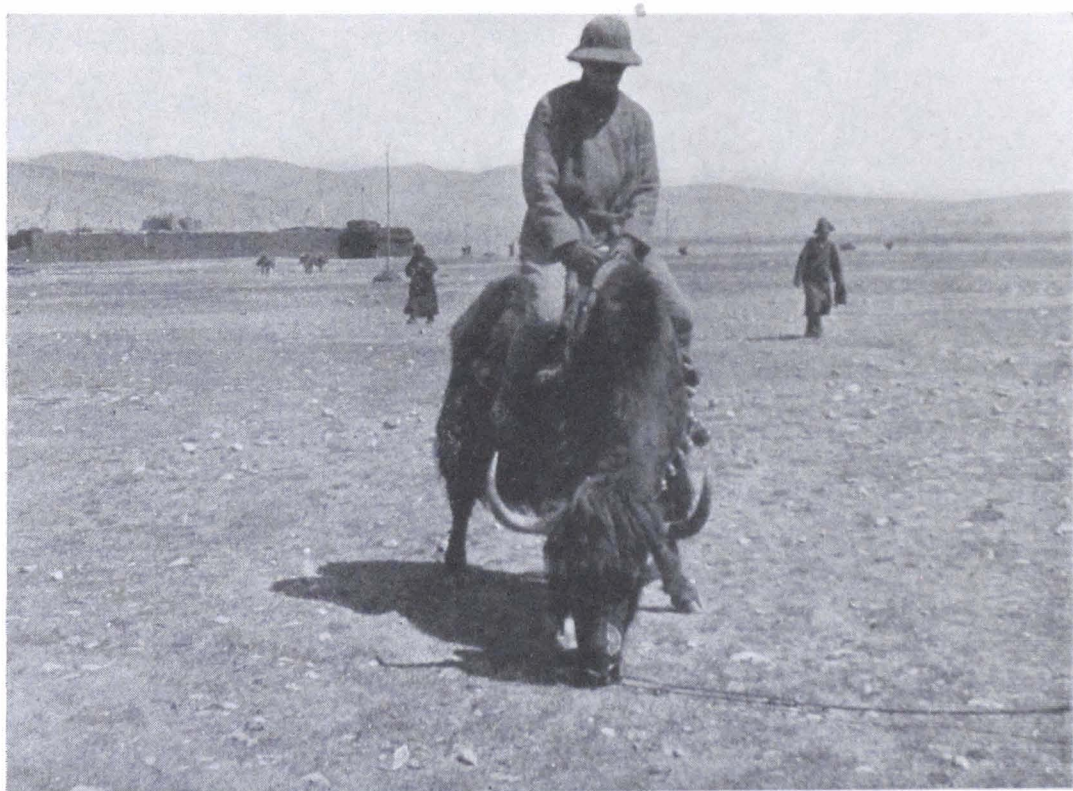
I cabled back to have the sealed envelope forwarded by air mail to London, there to await my call for it. Thus was the die cast!

But was it? I was not yet actually committed.

Before me rose the vision of vast, lonely stretches of naked desolation; a melancholy land, barren of tree or shrub; a wilderness of rock and snow where icy gales blew mercilessly across shelterless plateaux. Tibet the inaccessible, quarantined by nature behind high Himalayan ranges; its valleys beginning where Jack's beanstalk ended. But it promised new sights, new sounds, new contacts with life every hour. The call of the Outlands was irre-



THE AUTHOR BY A DAK-BUNGALOW



THE AUTHOR RIDING A YAK

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sistible. I wrote at once to the Political Officer telling him that I would avail myself of the permit.

I knew little about the route I was to travel. The Political Officer in a former letter had described it as a rough, hard journey. I had also read books written by members of Sir Francis Younghusband's Mission to Lhasa in 1904, which had opened up the route I was to journey over. Of these, L. Austine Waddell, one of the best known writers, says:¹

"Hannibal's crossing of the Alps was a mere bagatelle to General Macdonald's crossing of the Jelep Pass at 14,390 feet above sea level." He speaks of the difficulty of breathing in the rarefied air, the dreadful mountain sickness that caused even transport animals to succumb by the roadside; of the summit . . . a knife-edge swept by a merciless blast which cuts like a knife through thickest garments as if they were gauze. He describes sliding and slipping down the loose shoot of frost-splintered rocks on the Tibetan side of the Pass.

Percival Landon, special correspondent of the *London Times* with the Mission, says of the Jelep and Natu Passes, both of which I was to cross:² "Over these no burdened beast can pass. Only on the backs of coolies could the precious stores be carried across, slowly and painfully. It was a tre-

¹ See "Lhasa and Its Mysteries," p. 78.

² See "Lhasa," p. 53.

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mendous task, and it was difficult to believe that day after day obstacles so appalling could be overcome." And further:³

"Climbing over these boulder-strewn surfaces would be bad at sea level; here, where the air is so thin, it soon becomes a burden to pull one's solid body over the heartless obstacles. If the ascent be at all steep the newcomer will sit down every twenty or thirty yards . . . he thinks that another step forward would be his last. This is a peculiarity which it is impossible to describe to those who have never been more than a thousand feet or so above sea-level. The lungs seem foolishly inadequate to the task imposed upon them; the pluckiness of one's own heart is an unmistakable but somewhat terrifying symptom, for it goes on beating with increasing strokes till it shakes the walls of the body; and not the written testimony of the leading heart expert in London will convince you that it is not on the point of bursting its envelope. I have seen men in such a state that they seem to have every symptom of habitual drunkenness; all the limbs shiver, and in the bloodless face the eyes have that extraordinary look of insanity which is, I think, caused by an inability to focus them. The speech comes with difficulty, and in one case I saw the mental coherence was as obviously at fault as the physical. I do not suppose that there can well be

³ See "Lhasa," pp. 76-78, by Percival Landon.

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condensed into three or four hours such an agony of aching. The brain seems cleft into two, and the wedge, all blunt and splintery, is hammered into it as by mallet-strokes at every pulsation of the heart; and through all this you still have to go on, to go on, to go on. Here, too, the wind exacts its toll. This is no slight matter, for the toil of climbing is excessive and the exertion will drench a man with perspiration; he then sits down, and this strong wind plays upon him to his own enjoyment, and to the destruction of his lungs."

This was hardly an inspiring picture, but I was in magnificent health and did not actually fear climbing at high altitudes. What filled me with dread was the path itself which he described as: "A wall of precipitous rock springing up from the level plain."

These descriptions gave me all the information I had when I started on the journey which I was to make alone with native servants.

CHAPTER II

LOOKING DOWN THE YEARS

THERE are numerous sections of the globe as isolated and as desolate as Tibet; several that are equally "forbidden territory"; yet for hundreds of years, and with the passionate persistence that led the Crusaders to Palestine, men have sought to penetrate beyond the borders of that vast tableland, to achieve what is perhaps chiefly a victory of the imagination.

What is the magic of the land that has nothing to give and wishes to receive nothing from the world outside?

Ever since the days when a mere nomad and herder of beasts, who could not write and who had never seen a city, led his hordes out of the Gobi desert to enslave the civilized world, the mystery of the vast steppes of Asia have held the imagination of men.

Batu the Splendid with his Golden Horde, Genghis Khan, and his grandson Kublai, have left legends that enrich the record of the human race. One pictures enduring comradeships pledged in jewel-encrusted flagons, houses hung with cloth of

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gold, or barbaric splendors swept aside in the fierce struggles between clans, when javelins and iron maces armed the wild horsemen whose shrieks of rage rent the silent vastnesses.

Tibet shares in the mystery of far Cathay, and I searched for what was known of its past and learned that no record had ever been discovered that threw any light on its ancient history, but that the Tibetans themselves had anticipated Darwin in claiming descent from a monkey. All that was actually known about them, it seemed, was that they had once been a virile race that had overrun the territory of less warlike neighbors, and extended their dominion from Mongolia to the Bay of Bengal and from China to Baltistan. The very name Tibet, by which we know it, is derived from the Turks and from the Persians, for the people themselves speak of their country as Bod or Bodyul.

Down the centuries, the exploits of the great King Kesar have been cherished in an epic comparable to the Iliad, of which only a few manuscripts exist, and no printed copies. It is recited orally by the descendants of this warrior king, who now lie supinely under the dominion of a theocratic government, apparently not even "hugging the delusive phantom of hope."

Tibetans are of the same linguistic family as the Burmese, and according to legend their earliest King came from India about the first century B.C.

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Codes of criminal laws were formulated that were not unlike those published by the Visigoth Alaric II in the days when men were not free and equal, but valued at the price of their profession; when the murder of a gold-worker was punished by a fine of one hundred soldi, but only forty were assessed for hastening the departure of a carpenter to the spirit world.

Yet there was one Tibetan king who experimented in a more literal equality than the fondest dreams ever conjured up. All the wealth of his realm was divided equally, not once but three times . . . and each time with worse results. For the poor in their period of ease became indolent and lost the habit of working: and chaos ensued that was only checked when the king was murdered by his own mother who disapproved of his experiments.

We do not know how great was Tibetan civilization before the influences of China and India bore upon them; but far back in history they burned charcoal, and understood irrigation, the making of pottery, and the use of hand-loom.

It was during the reign of a seventh century king that Buddhism was introduced by means of his two wives, one a daughter of the Emperor of China, the other a princess of Nepal. And with the advent of Buddhism came the struggle for dominance by the priests. Lang-darma, the last king, was finally murdered by a Lama because he headed the anti-

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Buddhist faction, and in the state of civil war that ensued the country was split into small principalities under the rule of feudal chiefs, the ruins of whose forts are still to be seen topping mountain crests.

Levies of militia were raised by each petty noble and each village head-man, who had to provide five or ten or more men or horses according to population. Urgent calls were made by sending a white scarf tied to an arrow through the glens, just as the fiery cross was the herald of the Scottish Highlanders.

Genghis Khan conquered Tibet in 1206, and at the end of the thirteenth century the rule of Priest-Kings was instituted by Kublai Khan, who gave the sovereignty of Tibet into the hands of the High Priest of Sa-kya. Today the Lamas number one-sixth of the total population and live in unproductive ease on the labors of their lay brethren.

They consume approximately one-half of the entire revenue of the country, besides holding rent-free grants and direct subsidies, and are firmly entrenched in power, for each family must give at least one member to the church, and always those who are free from physical defect. Under the influence of Buddhism, Tibet has steadily declined as a military nation, and now vacillates between the powers that seem to offer the surest backing, doubtless mindful of the Tibetan proverb: "A tall, strong

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pine is a great help, for with its support the weak vine may climb as high.”

Tibet has not always been isolated except by natural barriers of high mountains along her borders. As early as the middle of the eighth century A.D. Holy Men of India wandered through the country preaching. Padma Sambhava founded lamasaries all over the country, and the poet-saint Mi-la-re-pa lived a life of asceticism in the caves of Tibet and sang: “The entire universe hath been translated into gold; no need have I to tie gold up in packets and in pouches.”

Beginning with Friar Oderic in the 14th century, numerous Catholic priests had made their home in Lhasa. The Capuchin Mission there lasted for fifty years and the Jesuits Desideri and Freyre lived thirteen years in Lhasa. During that century the Pope of Rome also had correspondence with the Dalai Lama. When the first Christian Missionaries went to Tibet they were surprised to find there all of the institutions of the Church of Rome . . . a pontifical court, and many of the vestments and forms of worship associated with Catholicism.

Traveling merchants brought to Europe reports of a spiritual chief among the Tartars which started the rumor of Prester John, a Christian Pontiff of Asia. The Pope sent a mission to search for him; so also did Louis IX of France, but both were

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unsuccessful. Small communities of Nestorians, which they did find, served to keep the rumor alive. This semi-mythical character is said to have been Toghrul, the sworn-brother of Genghis Khan, and chief of the most powerful of the Gobi nomads who held the river lands where the city of Urga is now situated.

Strangely enough it was the Tibetans who first opened up communication with the British as far back as 1772.

The Bhutanese, then vassals of the Tibetans, had descended into the plains of Bengal and carried off the Raja of Cooch Behar, seized his country, and so menaced the British province of Bengal, that the then Governor, Warren Hastings, was forced to drive them back into their fastnesses.

At that time the Tashi Lama of Tibet, acting for the infant Dalai Lama, interceded for the Bhutanese with Warren Hastings, and in response the latter sent Bogle into Tibet to negotiate a treaty. Later Samuel Turner was sent, and the correspondence between Warren Hastings and the Tashi Lama might have shaped events to a happy intercourse between the British and the Tibetans, had not an unfortunate coincidence arisen after the departure of Hastings, to undo all the good work he had accomplished to further friendly relations with the Tibetans.

In 1792 the Nepalese invaded Tibet, sacked

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Shigatse, and carried off plunder from the monasteries. The Chinese army intervened; and the arrival of the British envoy about this time was used to create the impression that the British had instigated the attack. From that time dates the edict that: "The approach of strangers, even of Bengal and Hindustan, is utterly prohibited."

Through the century and more following the exclusion act, the Tibetans crossed freely into India to trade. Then in 1886 they occupied a place in the British dependency of Sikkim, called Lingtu, and boasted that they would also occupy Darjeeling.

As they refused to withdraw when ordered to do so, the matter was referred to the Chinese Government, then the controlling influence in Tibet. A year elapsed without results, when in 1888 the British warned the Tibetan commander that unless he evacuated force would be used. The letter was returned unopened, as was another sent later to the Dalai Lama.

British troops finally forced the Tibetans back over the Himalaya to the Chumbi Valley, and in 1890 an agreement was reached that recognized the crest of the range as the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. Pillars were erected by the British Political Officer of Sikkim, but these were demolished by the Tibetans, who once again invaded the British dependency and refused to withdraw until forced to do so by British troops.

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In 1893 the Trade Mart of Yatung, just the other side of the Jelep Pass in Tibet, was opened to British subjects, with Trade Regulations established that were to be subject to revision in five years. But when the Government of India then moved for fuller trade facilities and Lord Curzon made several attempts to open direct communication with the Tibetans, all papers were returned with unbroken seals.

It then leaked out that the Dalai Lama had secretly been negotiating with the Tsar of Russia, and the presence of Dorjiew in Russia as the Dalai Lama's representative gave sufficient weight to this rumor.

The British Government could not look upon any move that might change the status of Tibet, without grave concern; for, although the Russo-Japanese war had not then taken place, Russia was on the crest of a great wave of expansion that made her growing influence press close upon the borders of India in spite of her distance therefrom. She had overrun Manchuria and western Turkestan, and had annexed the Pamirs. If Russia gained too great influence in Tibet, which runs for over a thousand miles along the northern border of India, and is ethnologically affiliated with the British dependencies there, it might well come to mean that these states would look to Russia as the real power. The flouting of British authority in the domain of

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the British dependency of Sikkim brought the logical recommendation for prompt action, and the sending of an armed mission to Lhasa under the leadership of Sir Francis Younghusband in 1904.

Added anxiety was felt at that time over Press reports that China was making a secret agreement with Russia, promising to relinquish Chinese interests in Tibet to Russia in return for the latter's support in upholding the integrity of China. More weight was given to these reports by the fact that for years Russia had been sending semi-official and semi-scientific expeditions into Tibet, all of which had reported a wealth of gold found there and urged the desirability of acquiring concessions. One is mindful of this situation today when suspected agents of the Soviet Government are excluded from India.

The entry of Sir Francis Younghusband's Mission into Lhasa was the first time that any Englishman had set his foot in the Forbidden City since the adventurer Manning found his way there in 1811, and strangely enough it fulfilled an old Tibetan prophecy which says: "The British are the road-makers of Tibet."

The treaty which Sir Francis signed in the palace of the Dalai Lama at Lhasa secured for the British the right to establish a Trade Agency in Lhasa and one in Gyantse, the third largest town in Tibet, about one hundred and forty miles distant

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from Lhasa. The former concession was voluntarily relinquished by Great Britain, ostensibly as a mark of good will, but also perhaps because the retention of such a post, calling for military escort so far distant from the base of supplies and in the heart of a hostile country, would be a costly and hazardous obligation, and probably a source of future friction which it was to the interest of Great Britain to avoid.

So diplomatically has the situation been handled since by Great Britain, that during the world war the Dalai Lama of Tibet offered one thousand Tibetan soldiers to fight on the British side, and ordered that special services be held in the monasteries all over Tibet for the success of British arms.

The Trade Mart of Gyantse, some hundred and fifty miles inside the Tibetan border, was retained by the British. A Trade Agent is still stationed there with an English doctor and a company of Indian Infantry of about one hundred and fifty men under two British officers. The Trade Route from this point down into India via the Jelep and Natu Passes is one of many that bisect Tibet in every quarter. It is not a road in the ordinary sense of the word, but the same path that for countless ages had been worn down by the hoofs of Tibetan ponies and yaks. For the passage of the British army a rough stone causeway was laid, but nothing has been done to keep it in repair along

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the Jelep Pass route; and I found the stones so badly disarranged and upturned that it was infinitely worse than climbing over rough ground or mud would have been.

The Tibetan concession was for British subjects only. But later agreement between the Dalai Lama and the British authorities resulted in extending the permit to such aliens as the British authorities would vouch for, with the definite restriction that under no circumstances were they to be permitted to diverge from the prescribed route or attempt to go beyond Gyantse.

When the Englishman McGovern did succeed in eluding the authorities, and made his way into Lhasa, it was a source of grave difficulty for the British, whose vigilance has since been redoubled. One is expected to register in advance with the authorities in Derjeeling, the exact dates of arrivals and departures at each stage of the journey. Because of the fact that no one but myself was on the trail at the time I elected to travel, I was not held to this rule. The limited accommodations along the route, and the scarcity of transport and supplies, are other reasons for limiting the permits.

But any one having a permit may put up in the dak bungalows when they are not commandeered by traveling officials. One can also obtain at each stage the necessary pack animals to carry all supplies; and with the bad feeling that is made when

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a traveler seeks to take his own mules through, and the resistance offered thereto, it is wiser to endure the delays and inefficiency of transport accommodations along the road. All of this I discovered after I was well along on my journey and had to send back across the Himalaya the outfit I had brought with me and expected to keep throughout the journey.

However, one can provide oneself with all the food, clothing and equipment necessary for a journey in Tibet, a situation which is quite contrary to the difficulties explorers face in such a place as Labrador, for instance, where pack animals cannot be used at all. Where they can be used it is no longer considered a heroic or necessary part of an adventurous journey to travel in discomfort. Roy Chapman Andrews told me that even in the Gobi desert he supplied his men with every comfort that was required to keep them up to their best efficiency.

An adventure that lacks the appeal of scientific investigation, or an arresting central figure, is too often padded out of all semblance of truth to provide thrills that belong in a detective story for those who, like audiences of old, sit safely above an arena with thumbs turned down on the victims below. A well-known publisher once said to me: "We would not bid for Admiral Byrd's book, because we figured that without an accident it would not be inter-

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esting enough, and if one occurred there would be no book.”

Though I traveled entirely alone with native servants, and stayed in the jungle where there were wild animals, no accidents or extraordinary dangers marred my journey into the highest land in the world; three-fourths of it over ten thousand feet above sea-level, and many of its plains and valleys lying above sixteen thousand feet; a land that is birthplace of the greatest rivers of Asia, the Indus, the Brahmaputra, the Irrawadi, the Yangtse Kiang, and the Hoang Ho. Therein, I think, lies its great mystery and magic.

It was the end of January when I received my permit to make the journey to Tibet. By March the heat in the plains of India grows severe and I wanted to pass through them and get up into the mountains before then. I had to work night and day to settle my affairs and get away.

CHAPTER III

RIDING THE AIR TO INDIA

WHEN I arrived in London I found the sealed envelope that had been forwarded from the authorities in India. The letter stated:

“The Government of India have sanctioned your visit to Gyantse during this summer on certain conditions. A Pass enabling you to cross the frontier from Sikkim into Tibet is also enclosed.

“You should obtain passes to cross the ‘inner line’ from Darjeeling into Sikkim and to occupy the dak bungalows in the Darjeeling district and in Sikkim from the Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling.

“Passes to occupy the dak bungalows in Tibet are issued by the British Trade Agent, Yatung, to whom timely application should be made, giving dates definitely.”

The letter also stated that there were no bandits along the route to Gyantse. So much for rumors! The cherished Pass read:

FRONTIER PASS

No. 10. I-/31

Mrs. Richard T. Merrick is hereby authorized to cross the frontier from Sikkim into Tibet either

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by the Jelep Là or Natu Là and to proceed into Tibet as far as Gyantse.

Attached were the conditions. Briefly these restricted the length of my stay to a given number of weeks, and my route to Yatung and Gyantse. I was prohibited shooting and fishing or visiting monasteries without special consent of the authorities concerned. Further restrictions were put on what I might publish regarding the visit, whether based on material obtained during the visit or otherwise. Any published statement had first to be submitted to the British authorities. Such statements or paragraphs, therefore, as they did not wish to have published, have been omitted from this narrative.

The journey from England to India would have taken three weeks by boat at a cost of \$460.00. I found that I could fly from England to India, a distance of five thousand five hundred miles, in a week for only seventy-five dollars more than the boat trip, with an extra twenty-five dollars for transit visas which, for an American, must include, besides the British one, France, Switzerland, Italy, Jugoslavia, Greece, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Persia and India.

Loving contrasts, and having just made an ocean voyage, I could not resist the temptation to journey by air on my way to tropical jungles, and high snows, and I was weighed in with my luggage for

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the long flight that inaugurated the first African Air Mail.

All too short were the days in England. One memorable afternoon I had tea with Sir Francis Younghusband, to whom introductory letters for me had been sent by his Excellency the British Ambassador in Washington and by Dr. La Gorce, Vice-President of the National Geographic Society.

I had tried to picture what he would be like, the man who in his youth had scaled the most formidable mountain pass in India, the disused Mustagh, which no white foot but his own has ever trod. Strangely enough, I had never seen a picture of him, and thought of him always as he might have looked at twenty-four when he made his memorable journey across Asia.

The famous explorer proved to be a somewhat grave person with bushy mustache and eyes very blue and very "beyond" in their gaze. There was no breath of the snows in his cordial greeting, and we were soon up on mountain tops in spirit, recalling the days of his high adventure . . . vivid memories, too, of his fighting days along the road to Lhasa . . . dreary months in camp on a wind-swept plain which I would so soon see myself.

He spoke of the influence the mountains had always had on him; "I used to go out from camp all by myself and just stand and gaze at the snow range," he said. He has the serenity, the aloofness

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that hill men have, as if both the little questions and the big ones were settled and all was well. Though he is much like a mystic, he is not without a sense of humor; and a quick smile spread over his face and his eyes twinkled when in answer to his query whether I would have cream or lemon in my tea I said: "Just make it anyway. I shall not know what I am drinking; it's a bit staggering to have you pouring tea for me when I have been seeing you for years dragging bloody feet along the greatest glacier in the world."

Sir Francis gave me many valuable "pointers" for my journey and was greatly interested that I should be going over the route which he opened up in 1904.

"And how you will love the Sikkim jungles," he exclaimed. "I envy you the experience. But you should take with you some one who knows the flowers and trees and the birds and butterflies, for nowhere are they so wonderful as in Sikkim." Alas, I tried in vain to find the double of Sir Joseph Hooker.

There was tea one day also with General and Mrs. Bruce, he who headed two of the Mount Everest expeditions, and who looks quite capable of making a third one. When I quoted some of the writers' opinions about the Gyantse journey he made light of the difficulties, which encouraged me, although I knew that he had not made that particu-

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lar expedition himself. But after my return he wrote me that he was really afraid I would find difficulty in getting into Tibet.

Days were so filled with interest that I did not have time for much speculation. I suppose when one has lived through typhoons, and caught fishes in one's basement where the water rose to the ceiling after a cloudburst; when one has spent months beside a cholera camp; watched the broad tail of a comet flash across the sky; been in a Zeppelin raid and heard Big Berthas booming near the war front; or crept through the night with blanketed portholes, the fear of a submarine in one's heart; been in earthquakes that made the pictures on one's walls clack like castanets . . . all of which I had experienced, one should be shock-proof. Yet I confess to having had some misgivings as we took the air in a huge dragonfly, with sleet and snow presaging an unpropitious journey, at Croydon Field.

Up to that time my only experience in the air had been a half-hour flight years before in a tiny open two-passenger practice plane, where I sat beside the pilot wearing goggles and helmet. Now I was made comfortable in a cushioned chair with a fur rug over my knees, and prominently displayed in front of me the sign: NO SMOKING: NOT EVEN ABDULLAS.

On the back of each chair were metal boxes con-

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taining raw cotton pads to stuff in our ears and an envelope supposed to contain chewing gum to ease the air pressure on ear drums . . . but some one had got the chewing gum ahead of me.

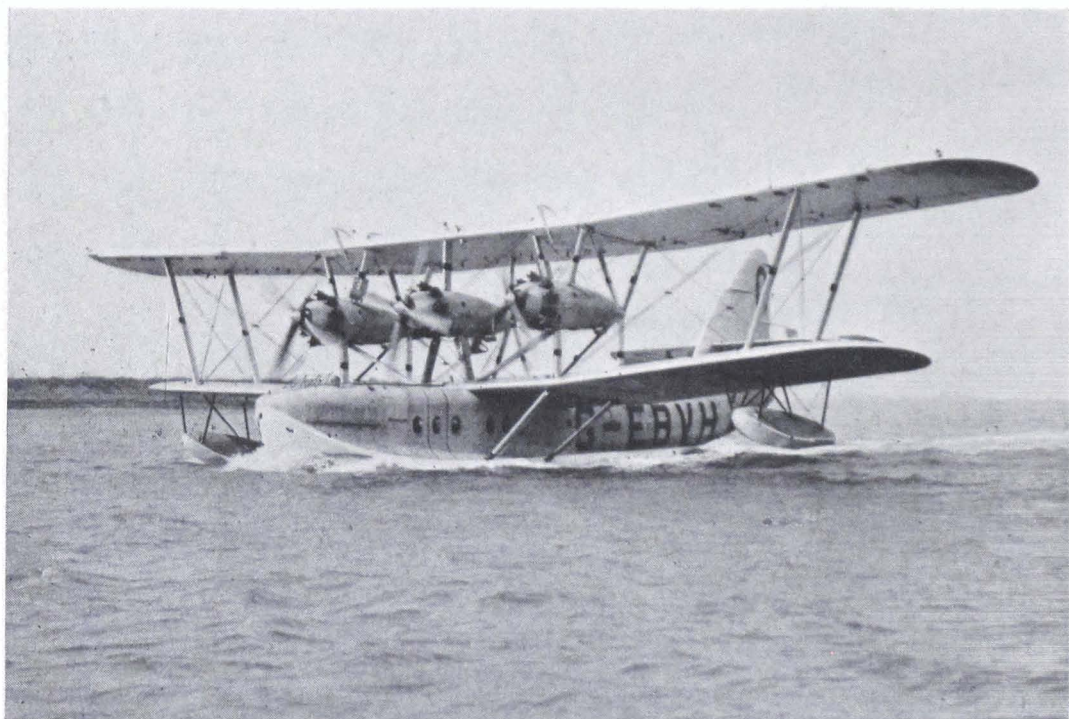
I gripped the arm of my chair as the engines speeded up, and if any one had asked me how I felt then I should have answered with the darkey who said he was "enjoyin' po' health." I even felt a bond of sympathy for the Irishman who declared that he'd rather be a coward for ten minutes than dead all his life. It was a heartless smile that I mustered when the man behind me volunteered the information that the temperature was too low for ice to form on the wings.

In spite of a high wind the plane was so steady that even in "bumps" there was little discomfort; but we had to come down at Lympne to await weather reports from Le Bourget before proceeding. We were off again when it came, crossed the channel in twenty minutes, and on arriving in Paris were told that because of weather conditions there were no planes flying Europe and that I, as the only passenger going on, would have to proceed as far as Athens by the Simplon Special that night and resume the flight from there.

It was a tiresome journey until Salonique was passed, and Mount Olympus, snow-covered, came into view; then grand scenery, a night in Athens, and off at eight next day in a "Calcutta" flying



ONE OF THE PLANES USED ON THE LONG FLIGHT



A "CALCUTTA" FLYING BOAT TOOK ME FROM ATHENS, ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN
TO EGYPT

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boat from Phaleron Bay with two men passengers, beside myself, who were going to Cairo.

We headed for Mirabella Bay in the Island of Crete, to refuel at our only stop on the seven and a half hour flight over the Mediterranean. As we circled above the harbor we passed over a big steamship, then shortly after came a note from the pilot which was passed from hand to hand:

“We are approaching the Isle of Milo to the right, where the famous statue was unearthed . . . now in Paris. Milo is famed for sand used in glass manufacture which is exported to Italy and Austria. The only mechanical power on these islands are wind mills and several in line may be seen working . . . to the left.”

We craned our necks out of the portholes. Two hours later came a less inspiring epistle:

“Don’t be alarmed if you’re knocked about a bit now. We’re about to land and it’s apt to be rough with this wind. Look out that things in the racks don’t fall down on your heads.”

Later the pilot gave a most humorous impersonation of the passengers as seen from the cockpit: The sudden cessation of automatic chewing; the rolling of eyes in the direction of the engines, especially if one of them back-fired or ceased to purr evenly; the gesture of distress when “bumps” occurred; the slow, thoughtful resumption of chewing

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when anxiety is momentarily relieved; the very rapid chewing when they want to assure themselves that there is no need for alarm; the frantic way they jump up and punch already secure articles in the racks overhead when such a warning as we had just received was given them. That was what we all did. The pilot explained that there was a tiny hole in the door of the cockpit so that he could look through and see the passengers "in case any of them went crazy or were laid out by being thrown against the ceiling."

We landed in Mirabella Bay with spray driven high over the portholes, and a motor launch took us to the supply ship in the harbor. We had flown two hundred and thirty miles since leaving Athens, in two and a half hours.

Mirabella Bay is surrounded by mountains. The town, which is spread out over the hillside, dates from 350 B.C. and has not changed since then. The same stone houses and stone ovens in the streets; the same kind of life in the homes. So that was what a town was like over two thousand years ago!

It was raining, nevertheless we went ashore after lunch and walked through the town. On our return the pilot said to us:

"There is a strong head wind and increasing cloudiness. It would be a great risk to go on today as we carry only enough fuel for five hours flying, and will be over four hours out of sight of land.

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This plane would not last fifteen minutes in a high sea and there are storm signals from Alexandria. If you can make out for the night somehow here it will be better than to try to go on."

We agreed heartily. I was given the captain's stateroom, and the three men were accommodated between the ship and the shore. It was dawn when we took off from Mirabella Bay, an event more exciting than the landing: for in circling the bay we seemed to be turning into a submarine. Then we rose three thousand feet over the Mediterranean, going at ninety-five miles an hour and seeming to head directly for the full moon. Only two freighters were seen during four hours. In spite of bitter cold I had two hours of sleep before we landed in Alexandria.

From there a motor to Aboukir, and there a de Haviland plane which was to go all the rest of the journey to India. An Englishman and I were the only passengers; he also was going to Karachi.

First we flew to Cairo, then from Heliopolis over more desert driven by winds into high brown waves. The pyramids came into view, then the Suez Canal, and later the Sinai desert. One thought of Mary and Joseph making their weary way with the Child to escape Herod's decree; of Moses leading the Exodus, and of the Pharaohs with their hosts marching to conquer Nineveh.

Sunset was a hazy glow over the desert; then

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came black night . . . but thick with stars. For over an hour we flew among them, a tiny dot and dash in the immensity.

Air thoughts are different from Earth thoughts. They seem to be liberated from the rules of logic, more fantastic than the dream of a skyscraper would have seemed in the days of Christ. I had been down into the bowels of the earth in a coal mine, and across high snow mountains; now I was riding the air. Any sort of an adventure seemed possible in this wonderful world. But I wasn't *in* the world. I was quite outside and above it in the ether. I might have been on my way to Mars, or to the moon . . . we seemed to be flying directly into it as it rose a fiery ball among the stars.

Imagination ran riot. I realized that life was as mysterious as death, and one no more to be feared than the other. A contribution to contemporary thought which, if not original, is yet not stressed enough down on the earth, but strikes one forcibly "where the winds no leash have known, and the soul is king of itself, up there with the stars alone."

Then down, down, down we came in easy swoops, banking around a circle of flares and landing at Gaza beside a low bungalow where we found a stove heating a spacious living room, and a good supper awaiting us.

It was bitter cold when we took off at half past five next morning. Heavy dew was over every-

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thing. We longed for fur robes at five thousand feet. Below were the rounded hills of Judea. Bethlehem and Jerusalem lay beyond on our left. Then hills so bleak that they could harbor only a very Dead Sea which lay twelve hundred feet below the elevation of Gaza.

The Syrian desert was another brown ocean across which we flew for five hours. At half past ten we landed in the middle of it at Rutbah Wells, which is two hundred and forty-one miles from Gaza and the only spot from the railway line to the Euphrates where water may be found all the year round. The Iraq Government has constructed a stone fort there with large central courtyard wherein is a resthouse, a serai, and a wireless station, an absolute model of the forts one reads about in "Beau Geste." Only five years before all was wilderness there, and roamed over by Bedouin tribes. One sees them even today herding their sheep and camels along the desert. Some day surely tourists will stop to see excavations of the relics of the Roman Legions who held Transjordan for many years, and had on this spot a granary.

The plane was refueled while we had lunch, then two more hours flying to Bagdad on the Tigris, where we had a tedious wait for the mail to arrive. Imagine tediousness in the land of the Arabian Nights! Yet so it was, and with relief we went on to Basra, flying low over the Ctesiphon Arch that

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we might better see it, then rising to five thousand feet across the legendary site of the Garden of Eden where no sign of fertility remained.

Suddenly, below, we saw what looked like spirals of smoke from a thousand campfires. They spread out and thickened, and we realized that they were pillars of sand from an ever-increasing sandstorm that soon obscured everything. We rose higher to escape it and were enveloped in a sickly yellow light. After that, marsh land, if possible even more desolate than the desert; and below one noted the Shaiba trenches just as they had been during the war, running out in spirals from a central ring.

We came down at Basra after twelve hours of flying, eleven hundred and eighteen miles covered since dawn. A comfortable brick rest house received us and there was a stove in my room. I was soon asleep, dreaming of Sinbad the Sailor who here was pounced upon by the fabulous Roc and carried in its talons across the Persian mountains. Basra is a good starting point for those who wish to visit Ur. And at Basra our troubles began.

Nothing went right next day, and when it was over the pilot remarked that it had been one of the most trying ones he had ever spent; and we thanked our stars that we were alive to carry on.

It was bitter cold March seventh. A high wind was blowing off the snow mountains of Persia and the engines could not be coaxed to start. First one

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and then another would spin for a few rounds, then wheeze and stop; this over and over, while we passengers pranced back and forth, beating our hands to keep warm.

An hour late, we took the air and flew over ground seamed with rivulets. Then above Abadan, on the Euphrates, we looked down on the tanks of the Anglo-Persian Oil Co., and masses of palms along the river varied the view. After that we saw nothing but stark hills, desolate swamps, high mountain peaks, and the Persian Gulf, which we crossed at its upper end after flying two hundred and thirty-eight miles. We landed in Bushire.

Here were no sleeping accommodations, only a fueling station. We were due to come down later also at Lingeh to refuel and then go on for the night to Jask, which lies on the Strait of Ormuz that connects the Persian Gulf with the Arabian Sea. A man from Afghanistan and a Persian got on at Bushire. We were then four passengers.

We hugged the left shore of the Persian Gulf on our way to Lingeh. It was the most desolate of all desolate regions I have ever seen. And this, according to Dr. Langdon of Oxford University, was the real location of the Garden of Eden . . . a strip of land running along the Persian Gulf southward, from about the twenty-ninth degree of latitude, to the Strait of Ormuz and the Arabian Sea. He bases his contention on the Sumerian tablet

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found in the ruins of ancient Nippur, which has an engraved story that antedates the Hebrew or Biblical version by at least one thousand years.

We flew at five thousand feet. Volcanic mountains three to five thousand feet high fell precipitously into the sea. There was scarcely a valley discernible, merely rifts in a bleak range of mountains where some peaks showed silvery gray in lava core. One point was white with snow, and a cold wind made us all draw our coats about us. The sun shone fitfully through a haze, and we rose to eight thousand feet above jagged peaks that ran in every direction.

We had been gone an hour from Bushire. I got out my movie camera and tried to register the impression of this vast loneliness. When I had packed it in its case again and once more looked down out of the window the waters of the Gulf were on my left . . . we had turned completely round. Why?

The engines were purring evenly. We had just refueled with five hours' supply of petrol, and Lingeh was only about two hundred and fifty miles away. The noise of the engines and screws made speech impossible, and our ears were stuffed with cotton. I drew a question mark on a slip of paper and handed it across to the Englishman. Then we both held up our hands with that gesture which says: "I don't know what it is all about!"

We had no communication with the cockpit.

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There was nothing to do but sit and wait, knowing that something must be radically wrong to have made the pilot turn back when it was urgent to get the mails forward as fast as possible in view of the delays already experienced. It was then eleven o'clock. The speedometer registered eighty miles an hour and the altimeter five thousand feet.

When at last we came down at Bushire again the pilot told us that engine trouble was the cause; that the fulcrum pin had come half out of the head engine. He had noticed it because it was the engine directly in front of the cockpit. He said that if it had come entirely out it would without doubt have broken the propeller and put the engine out of commission and that the flying parts would probably have broken the other engines as well.

We had tea while the engines were overhauled at Bushire, and took on more fuel, then resumed the flight at an altitude of five thousand feet. The left engine backfired; the mechanic, who was seated in the compartment, looked nervously at it and when it occurred again he rose and went into the cockpit. We were all nervous but from then on the engines worked smoothly.

It was now too late to make Jask as our pilot was not eligible for night landing. Knowing that we would have to spend the night in Lingeh, where there are no sleeping accommodations, we had taken with us canvas field cots and blankets from

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Bushire. Just where we would bunk was left to chance.

Dense clouds rolled over us when we were at seven thousand feet; occasionally we could see land below through their fringes; it was lonely, vague and still up there and one felt so helpless. We seemed to hang motionless in space and I got out my fountain pen and wrote a score of postcards on my lap as comfortably as if I had been seated at a desk. When we came out of the clouds the floor of the world was a wide beach seamed with crevices where the waters of the Gulf had carved strange patterns. All was drab, not a bit of green anywhere, not a sign of life; all was barren as the waste lands of Tibet without their gorgeous coloring. Craggy, castellated tablelands of clay had been carved by oncoming and receding tides into fantastic outlines. It was the most cruel land that I have ever seen.

Then appeared plots of green far below; these separated from each other by dots that were actually trees. It looked as if a child had drawn diagrams in the sand with a stick. Some of the little mud daubs were houses with thatched roofs. We came down gradually to four thousand, then to three, then to two thousand feet. The engines were throttled and we landed at Lingeh after twice circling the field and out over the Gulf. It was then half past three and only one hundred and ninety

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miles from Jask, but over a cruel bit of land and an expanse of the Persian Gulf, and we must wait for dawn to take the air again.

A large crowd gathered about the plane when we landed. Conspicuous were the women, swathed in long black robes that completely covered them from the crown of their heads to their toes; long black veils were suspended from sticks fastened the length of their noses, and only their tragic kohl-rimmed eyes were visible. They turned quickly away when I tried to photograph them and we were requested not to take photographs in the town.

We had brought lunch along with us from Bushire, and the Englishman and I sat on planks against a shack and ate what we could capture of it in its flight before a high wind. The sun was intensely hot; for it is desert at Lingeh and all shut in by high mountains. After tiffin the Airways representative sent a Ford car for us to drive through the town.

In Lingeh there are about two hundred and fifty wells scattered through the village lanes, and in the yards of houses, and even in the graveyards. They are one of the main features of Lingeh. They are not wells in the real sense, but deep pits mounded over with round domes wherein rain water is collected through a tank at one side and held there for the use of all inhabitants during the long months of dryness.

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Some of the streets are very broad and all were clean. Wind-chimneys are also a noted feature of Lingeh. These are towers built on the house roofs with walls intersecting at right angles to form four funnels leading down into the houses to trap any breeze from whichever quarter it might blow. Every breath of air is precious in Lingeh, which is one of the hottest places on the Persian Gulf.

Houses in Lingeh are of white mud and many of them have really beautiful hand-carved and nail-studded doors. As there are no trees near-by, the wood must have been brought from a great distance. On the angles of some of the roofs were tiny bamboo pens that looked like hencoops where purdah women might take the air.

In the market place of Lingeh I purchased two brass pitchers with snouts like chicken beaks, only longer. The streets of the bazaar are covered over with braided bamboo, making welcome shade, and are lined with low mud shelves whereon food is displayed for sale. Men were cooking in clay ovens and pouring melted sugar over what looked like rolled bits of dough that were tossed in the air from flat baskets. The inhabitants of Lingeh live mostly on dates, and there has been practically no industry there since excess taxation made pearl fishing unprofitable.

Tall painted boats rode at anchor beside the wharf; from behind a high wall rose one towering

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minaret inset with blue mosaic. It was growing dusk and, as we passed, from its pinnacle a mullah intoned the stirring call to prayer which rang out into the wilderness . . . “Lá illáha illá ’llah Mu-hammadum Rasul ’llah.” “There is no God but God and Mohammed is his Prophet.”

The representative of Imperial Airways invited us all to dine at his house at eight o’clock, and there the Englishman and I repaired after our drive. We waited long beyond the hour set for dinner before the pilot and the mechanic and the wireless operator appeared. When they finally arrived they reported that they had spent the entire afternoon overhauling the engines, and thought that they had spotted the trouble with them. We devoutly hoped that they had. It was the first intimation we had that anything else was wrong with them.

Our host and hostess were Hindus and did not appear at table though they welcomed us warmly on our arrival and took gracious care of us. How they managed to provide a sudden meal in a place where there is scarcely even fish to be had was a mystery, but we were served . . . in courses:

Fried fish and tomatoes

Cold fish

Another hot fish, breaded and with cabbage

Chicken and potatoes

Pudding and canned pineapple

Bananas and coffee.

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During the meal, the pilot, the wireless operator, the mechanic, the Englishman, the Afghani, the Persian, and I, decided the all-important question of where we would sleep. It was agreed that we should all use the large tent on the flying field in order that we might waste no time in taking off at dawn next day.

The pilot, the only one really requiring rest, slept in his clothes on the ground, while the rest of us had cots. The pilots of the Imperial Airways always act as hosts. During the night the Afghani snored and the Persian ground his teeth. I had hardly got to sleep, it seemed, when we were awakened for the flight at four o'clock, just dawn.

We flew at seven thousand feet over the Persian Gulf, the rising sun dimly seen through a haze. Then we rose above the clouds that floated below us like little tufts of white cotton spun out. We seemed to be flying directly into the rising sun, and it was bitterly cold. Out and down and all around us was nothing but shifting cloud; occasionally, through a rift, one could see the sun reflected in the water. Then gray mist shut us in; not even clouds were visible; but beyond was a shadowy outline, a high mountain peak outlined against the lighter sky.

It was awe inspiring and somewhat terrifying. In the clouds that again drifted about us we seemed to be making no progress. The mountains that

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now showed through the haze ran out in a point into the Gulf where the Strait of Ormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman. We flew across Oman in Arabia. Bleak hills ran down sheer into the water, which was broken up into bays, and the sunlight, now seen through clouds, reflected for a moment on gray rocks. Below, beyond the Gulf of Oman, was a wide beach marked on the map "Pirate's Coast." And just there the Honorable Mrs. Victor Bruce had driven the nose of her plane into the sand a few months before and been rescued by Imperial Airways men after having had her belongings taken from her by the natives. Everything but her lipstick was recovered, by the way. So austere is the outlook over the mountains at this point that one person remarked that it "gnashed its teeth at you."

It was only seven-forty in the morning when we circled and came down at Jask, which lies at the point of a promontory where the waters about are infested with sharks. There is a rest house and a wireless station, and when the plane landed we got out and walked in bright sunlight and cool air while the plane refueled. We were once more in the air at eight o'clock and below were wonderful designs in the sands carved by receding waters . . . spreading branches of trees with twisted trunks, and a whole forest seemingly licked by tongues of flame.

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Gwadar in Beluchistan was reached at a quarter to twelve. Just a halt there in the desert desolation to refuel again. Only a couple of camels, two huts, and a group of natives, were to be seen. Again we got out to stretch our limbs and have tea. It was getting hotter as we neared India, and when we took the air we no longer needed our coats.

The country from Jask on looked as if God, having made it, had drawn His pencil through it to mark it off the map as a mistake. Most of this last stretch of the route, however, is over water, and a seaplane would seem to answer the purpose better but for the fact that the coast is treacherous and full of hidden rocks, and there are no harbors.

My watch noted half past three when we landed in Karachi, but it was half after six in the evening by local time. Five thousand five hundred miles had been covered in seven days: after a life so swift, here was slow-moving, picturesque, indolent India . . . turbaned natives, white oxen swaying from side to side as they drew high-wheeled carts along the dusty road, their expression so dignified, so indifferent, so altogether superior. My taxi was driven madly by a chauffeur who wore earrings and had a curly beard . . . altogether fascinating is India!

I left Karachi for Delhi by plane next morning

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after a night in a most comfortable hotel. A head wind forced us down to refuel at an emergency tank in the desert, and the sudden arrival of a free circus could not have caused more excitement among the few inhabitants of the countryside. Women in bright cotton saris peered in at the door of the plane; their long silver earrings touched their shoulders, and bangles encircled their ankles. My clothes and stockings came in for much discussion; they felt them shyly and I realized how extraordinary and how ugly their plainness must seem to those accustomed to gay attire.

It was then over hot desert to Jodhpur where lunch at a charming rest house awaited us. We landed in Delhi after over seventy hours in the air. In Delhi is the best hotel in all India, the Cecil, with delicious food, perfect service, and every comfort of home. How I loved to have my early morning tea brought to my bedside with the announcement: "Chota hazri, mem-sahib!"

Bless them . . . the naked Sadhus smeared with ashes and decked with lei wreaths, the ox carts, the camels laden with dung, the cattle that dispute one's passage along the pavement, the natives asleep just anywhere, as often as not where one must step over them in one's progress along the Chandni Chauk, the main street of Delhi.

Strange cries of the East mingled with the bagpipes of snake-charmers, the flutes, the tom-toms,

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the mullah's call from high minarets. And, after hours of patient waiting outside my door, the low cough of my bearer which said to me: "I sit here patiently awaiting your orders, mem-sahib."

CHAPTER IV

JUST MARKING TIME

ONE thinks of the snows and of expeditions to Mount Everest and Kangchenjunga when Darjeeling is spoken of. I supposed, of course, that it would also be the proper starting point for my journey across the Himalaya into Tibet, and imagined that, just as the shops of Srinagar, in Kashmir, had provided all necessary equipment for my first Himalayan adventure, so in Darjeeling would I find a base of supplies, and I therefore bothered very little with shopping in Calcutta. Though it was yet March, the heat was increasing, and after a few days I left by night train which landed me the next morning at the foot of the mountains at Siliguri, where the broad-gauge railroad line ends.

From there one can go by narrow-gauge railroad up to Darjeeling, a long, tiresome, and dirty journey, or in a comfortable motor over a broad and beautiful road that winds up through the forests.

Darjeeling is three hundred and eighty-six miles north of Calcutta. The whole territory known as British Sikkim, wherein lies Darjeeling, once be-

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longed to Nepal and was ceded to the Raja of Sikkim in 1817 as a result of wars over the frontier policy of the Gurkhas. In 1835 the Raja of Sikkim handed over this strip of hill territory, twenty-four miles long and about five or six wide, "as a mark of friendship to the Governor of Bengal" for the establishment of a sanitarium for the invalid servants of the East India Company. In return the Raja received an allowance of three thousand rupees, subsequently raised to six thousand per annum which at that time was, from a financial point of view, a transaction entirely in the Raja's favor.

In 1849, after a punitive force had entered Sikkim in retaliation for the indignities suffered by Sir Joseph Hooker and Dr. Campbell, who were imprisoned in Sikkim, the allowance was withdrawn and the whole of the Darjeeling district, covering an area of six hundred and forty square miles, was annexed. Under the British it has become a flourishing hill station.

Lest this develop into a rhapsody, I shall not even attempt to describe the snows as seen from Darjeeling. The effort has often been made, but perhaps never so well expressed as by the Russian painter Verestchagen who intended to paint them, but, when brought face to face with their majesty, cried instead: "Not now, not now, it is all too splendid!" He never did paint them. They cannot be

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captured by brush, or camera, or pen. Visitors are wont to look *out* over the ranges waiting for the mists to clear and give a glimpse of the snows. When this occurs, they find that instead of looking straight out across the wide valley, they have to crane their necks upwards, so high do the peaks soar into the sky.

Having settled myself comfortably in Darjeeling, I started out to shop for the necessary odds and ends needed to complete my camp wardrobe and equipment. Not one single article was to be found in Darjeeling.

My former experience of journeying across the Himalaya to Leh had taught me that several lightweight sweaters were better than heavy clothing, and I had these left over from my former journey, also a woolen divided skirt to wrap over my khaki riding breeches for the early morning starts, and a fur-lined cap, and a slicker to act as wind-break as well as protection in rain. But nowhere could I find proper boots. Only after much argument with the local bootmaker did I get him to make two pairs of hob-nailed ones to my pattern: one of them came to the knees, being of felt, fur-lined and covered with waterproof. Worn with two pairs of woolen stockings, they kept my feet warm when traveling knee-deep in snow. But I had to send to Calcutta for a tiffin basket, and to Kashmir for khud sticks, which are unheard of in the eastern Himalaya and

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yet are so useful on steep climbs, or on rough roads, or in deep snow.

I found that, because of the steep grades and higher altitudes along this route, it was not customary to take tents or tent equipment or kitchen ware and china along, as I had done in Kashmir. The high winds on the plateau of Tibet make tent-pitching and striking too difficult, and all such necessary articles are furnished in the dak bungalows.

I had boasted much in America about the cheapness of travel in India and in Kashmir, and was surprised to find how much higher prices were in the Darjeeling district. In Kashmir I got saddle horses for forty rupees a month, which is about eleven dollars. In Darjeeling they asked five rupees or one dollar and eighty-five cents a day for the same and four rupees a day for packmules. I got pack ponies in Kashmir to go the entire two hundred and fifty miles across the mountains from Kashmir to Leh for fifteen rupees. A rupee was then figured to be thirty-seven cents in our money.

An invitation came from Mrs. Odling, daughter of the famous Dr. Graham, who at that time was serving as Moderator of the Church of Scotland, a position equal to that of Archbishop of Canterbury. She suggested that I come to Kalimpong where she could help me with my outfit, and where prices were cheaper.

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It is possible to reach Kalimpong, thirty miles distant from Darjeeling, by short cut across the mountains in a Baby Austin car. But my servant and luggage required two of them, so I journeyed by the longer route back down the mountains to Siliguri and thence up the Teesta Valley. The road ran through a dense forest of sal trees, where vines trailed from branch to branch, and the deep scarlet flowers of dak trees stood out against the green. Spreading mangoes made grateful shade along the dusty road below which ran the Teesta River, a minor tributary of the Brahmaputra, which, in the rainy season, fed by snows from the Kangchenjunga region, is a savage torrent that tears through the valley, rending everything in its path. High cliffs ran up beside the road after it left the forest and dropped down to the Teesta Valley, which, though famed for its beauty, is perhaps the most unhealthy spot in all India: for there has been found the most deadly mosquito yet discovered, and it is said that once Teesta Valley malaria has thoroughly entered the blood stream it can never be eradicated. I thought of this when, on my way out of the mountains, I again struck this road during the rainy season. With the roadbed washed out, and a stream that I had to cross swollen to an impassable torrent, I had then, at ten o'clock at night, to leap across the open trestles of a railroad bridge above this torrent, and, by lan-

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tern light, find my way down an embankment through dense undergrowth, while welts as large as dimes were rising close together all over my legs and arms from the numerous bites of these pests.

Along the road up the Teesta Valley we occasionally passed the native Lepchas driving their cattle along the road; or village maidens with long, pointed baskets on their backs, held by straps across the forehead. Rows of white oxen lay contentedly beside high-wheeled carts covered with braided bamboo. Occasionally there were vistas of high ranges, and sometimes one looked down over terraced fields or marsh lands where lazy carabao wallowed in the mud.

All too soon I drove under an arched gateway, through a flower garden, and stopped under the porte-cochère of the two-storied Himalayan Hotel, a nine-room bungalow, vine-covered, with two wide verandas overlooking the snow ranges. The proprietor and his wife spared no pains for my comfort, and I settled there to make the final preparations for my journey.

Annexed from Bhutan in 1865, Kalimpong is now in the district of Darjeeling, but two thousand feet lower than that town, and less damp. The inhabitants are a conglomeration of Lepchas, the original inhabitants, Nepalese, who are fast usurping all avenues of enterprise, Bhutanese, and Ti-

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betans. It lies at the end of the Trade Route from Tibet and there the wool that is brought down over the mountains is stored for export. A more peaceful and lovely spot than Kalimpong is hard to imagine, for those who are content without club life or society.

All that there is of the latter is concentrated in the home of the Odlings, which is full of guests practically all the time. Having heard that they, in the absence of the founder, Dr. Graham, ran the "Homes of Saint Andrew" which care for six hundred Anglo-Indian waifs, and also the big, self-supporting, Kalimpong Industries which give work to hundreds of natives, I expected to meet a middle-aged couple, business-like, competent, kind; Mrs. Odling, I figured, would be the proverbial Good-woman-in-the-home type, but very little concerned with the delicious vanities of the world.

What was my surprise to find a bobbed-haired beauty, dressed in a chic red costume; a radiant personality. One imagined that no matter how well one might come to know her, she would let one's faults alone. Beside her were her youthful husband in the smartest of riding togs, and three delectable little girls. Their home was the last word in taste and luxury. I had no further worries with Buntty Odling at hand with timely help and good advice, and I settled down to "hazy lazy

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days of life, just breathing air” until I was permitted to start on my journey over the passes into Tibet.

There were walks at dawn when the air was cool, and the Kangchenjunga range spread like a Magnificat across the horizon; visits to Tibetan houses in the Bazaar; or hours just sitting on the wide veranda of the hotel, looking down over a wide valley where rivers met. Once these rivers actually quarreled bitterly, it is said.

Believe it or not, but long, long ago, when men and animals spoke to one another and understood one another’s language, the Teesta and the Rangeet Rivers had a violent dispute, and as a result the Rangeet refused to mingle its waters with those of the Teesta any longer. To prevent this, the spirits of the river blocked its mouth with a landslide and the waters rose and rose until only the top of Tedong, five thousand feet high, was left uncovered.

The Lepchas, who were then very numerous, were forced higher and higher up the mountain and all of their fields were submerged and starvation faced them.

Then men worshiped the spirits of the rivers and implored them to make up their quarrel. At last they did so, the dam burst, the waters mingled again, and all was well.

“And is that a true story?”

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“Of course! For there is the landslide to prove it.”

“And is that the local story of the flood?” you ask.

You are informed that there is yet another about a still more disastrous flood. The prophets of the Lepchas, however, had foretold it, and the people were prepared, for they had collected all the earthen pots in the neighborhood and had built a high mound therewith, a mound as tall as the tallest tree. When the flood came they sought to mount it to safety, but the pots broke and not one single person was left alive to tell of the horrors of that day.

I did not ask if that were true. Of course it was . . . one can still see what remains of the mound of broken pots.

In Kalimpong are no veiled women as down in India. They greet one fearlessly and entertain men and women equally in their homes. Girls do not marry until they are fifteen or sixteen, and when this event is to take place, a plantain leaf is wrapped around a little chopped betel-nut and two or three cloves and a piece of sugar; on the outside is written the name of the bride and that of the groom, and the wedding date. It is the wedding invitation.

America and all the bustle of life had faded out of the picture. When I travel in out-of-the-way

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places I lose all contact with my home environment; I leave no address, and write few letters; I absorb the new atmosphere, and the strangest of things come to seem more real than the experiences of a lifetime. I found myself entirely out of sympathy with the man who came into the hotel one day complaining bitterly because his hunting party had been broken up and he had only a short leave in which to enjoy himself.

“But you agreed to stay with me for three weeks,” he angrily exclaimed to the guide as he paid him off, without baksheesh.

“But of what use, Sahib? No luck could possibly come to us,” was the meek, pleading answer which said so plainly: “Do, please try to understand.” “The wife of Netuk is pregnant,” he explained. “It was inauspicious to continue after we learned that.” The air, it seemed, was full of evil spirits that must be placated, or fooled. Even if one were obliged to start a journey on an inauspicious day one should be sure to send one’s hat on ahead that the demons of the air might not know that one had dared their wrath.

I had taken a splendid bearer with me from Delhi to Darjeeling, but there I was warned that I must not take him across the mountains because of the cold and altitude, and a Tibetan was recommended to go in his stead to act as guide and interpreter. He was a man of business, and sepa-

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rated me at once from half of his first month's wages. Furthermore, he exacted one hundred and fifty rupees a month, though I had been paying only forty. But he was said to be most efficient, and an interpreter seemed to be a necessity, so I put up with his manner, that lacked all deference, though it gave no occasion for complaint. His inscrutable face had an underlight of passive suspicion and watchfulness about it that was disconcerting; and when I settled in Kalimpong I found him to be altogether inefficient, but endured this in anticipation of his more necessary services along the road.

Well for me that I had not started my journey direct from Darjeeling with him. The days of waiting proved a test that he could not stand. And one day a man came to me to warn me that my servant was going through the bazaar telling those who were to supply my transport that on no account must they rent me riding ponies for less than five rupees a day, when the local rate was three, or mules for less than four rupees when the price in Kalimpong was two. To both he promised that he would split profits with them. I was also warned that he was an unsafe person for me to go off alone with; that he was a liar and a thief and a drunkard. The latter charge was substantiated next day when he entered my room smelling like a walking bar and demanded that I turn over the control of my

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bandobast to him and permit him to engage all the transport.

This, of course, I declined to do, telling him that he was employed to interpret my orders. He then demanded further advances in money and I sent him away and told him to report next day; when he then appeared he was dismissed from my service. I had visions of further demands for money along the road when I should have been completely helpless. He would have had access to me at any time, and knew of course that I must carry a considerable sum of money. If he bullied me into giving it to him, or took it, which was more likely, it was not to be expected that he would let me return to report him; not when it would be so very easy to frighten my horse on a narrow rock ledge with every appearance of my drop over the precipice being an unavoidable accident.

When I dismissed him he went away sulkily; then came to me later and said: "I will meet you on the road. I shall take two gentlemen into Tibet and we will follow along your route."

I first ascertained, by telegraphing headquarters in Darjeeling, that no permits had been issued for two gentlemen or for any one else to go into Tibet at that time. Then I wrote to the authorities in Darjeeling and advised them of his threat, and notified them that I would, nevertheless, keep to

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my original plan and route, and suggested it might save unpleasantness if this man were prevented from following along after me. I was relieved when I received word that he would be held in Darjeeling until my return.

The ever-resourceful Bunty then suggested that I might persuade the pastor of the Tibetan mission to go along with me as interpreter, and when I offered the inducement that acts as a charm everywhere, I secured his services.

Tharchin was a new experience. Never before had I met such elaborate humility. He rarely raised his eyes above the level of my feet, and talked with bated breath, in whispering voice. Clearly he was the prodigy with whom a woman might safely go into the wilds. Tharchin furnished also the three saddle horses; one for me, another for himself, and one for my cook-bearer, for each of which I paid him three rupees a day.

A cook-guide in Kashmir costs forty rupees a month; a personal servant, or bearer, costs from thirty to thirty-five. Neither of them expects to be mounted. For this trip I had to pay a guide-interpreter one hundred rupees; a cook-bearer sixty, besides furnishing a mount for each of them at ninety rupees a month, a-piece. Also the service performed in Kashmir is far more arduous. There was tent-pitching, clothes-washing, the need of lending a helping hand to load and unload the pack

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ponies. None of all this had to be done on the road to Gyantse.

I had cut my requirements to the minimum for a two months' journey. Four bedding rolls, two cowhide boxes, or yakdans, a large canvas shoe-bag, a medicine basket, and four small wooden boxes of food supplies, plus odds and ends that went as small top-loads. That was all the luggage for myself and servants, and called for seven mules, with an extra one taken on for the high passes.

My food consisted of canned vegetables, soups, butter, milk, salmon, sausage, baked beans, jam, rice, tea, sugar, chocolate bars, Force, bovril, crackers, and liver extract.

Along with the usual simple remedies, I packed an extra supply of Eno's Fruit Salts and castor oil in the medicine basket. My former experience had taught me that I would be called on to remedy many an unpicturesque ailment at every stopping place. Also I recalled General Bruce's advice to the Kangchenjunga climbers: "Worm your porters." Worms are a curse among hill men and often render the strongest porter useless. Apparently this is an age-old story, for one reads in the Ebers' papyrus, written 1500 B.C., a prescription of Berries of the Castor Oil tree for like ailments. The boiling point of water falls about two degrees with every thousand feet of elevation, and above ten thousand feet it cannot be heated beyond one hun-

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dred and eighty degrees, Fahrenheit, which is not sufficient to burst the starch pods in food. It is not surprising that stomach disorders are universal in high altitudes.

A very gracious custom in Tibet requires that one should not enter a house empty-handed; therefore I had provided myself with numerous simple gifts such as clocks, watches, woolen gloves, boxes of soap, hand mirrors and the like. I had also a number of silk ceremonial scarves which in Tibet take the place of visiting cards. These are thrown across the outstretched hands of one's hosts or hostess at the moment of greeting, a pretty custom. But all these things added bulk, and there was considerable amusement as my packing progressed, while good advice was showered upon me by friends who watched the process.

"Take plenty of soap . . . you'll need it in Tibet," one suggested.

"Don't forget your hot water bottle," said another.

"Take books. Take writing paper and pencils. Take . . ." But I stopped them, exclaiming: "Yes, and take all this good advice and go as a traveling salesman!"

CHAPTER V

THE START

I TIP-TOED downstairs on May Day, filled with the elation that always comes to me as I set out on a journey. What new experiences would be added to the unforgettable memories that will companion me when I become just a nice person beside the hearth? Even now I like to speculate whether I enjoyed most an experience in the Philippines . . . the lazy progress up-stream on a bamboo raft, drawn by a swimming carabao, or that wild motor ride from Waikiki Beach in Honolulu to the dock, just in time to board my steamer before it sailed.

I was greeted at the front door by Lobsang, "Ocean of Learning," my chief muleteer, recommended as one who would be a tower of strength to me and never let me down; a huge Tibetan with broad shoulders and round eyes, far apart, in an expressionless face; skin no darker than that of a well-tanned white man, and a bullet-shaped head from which every vestige of hair had been shaved off. His bare feet were thrust into European boots that remained unlaced; his wine-colored homespun

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robe was held in at the waist by a broad red cotton sash and hung open in front to display a gay vest of green which is not a usual part of the Tibetan costume. Captain Kidd would have felt thoroughly at home with him.

Lobsang was busy with his two assistants sorting kit. One of these, the Tibetan Tsigyalbu, was old, and his every motion had an arresting dignity. The other, Lhatuk, a Bhutanese, was in his twenties; a mop of thick curly hair stood straight up on his head, and he jumped this way and that, piling things on the patient mules, or bending his thick-set stocky form to lift with ease boxes that weighed eighty pounds.

Karnah Bahadur and Rhamtarsa were introduced as the coolies who would carry the meat safe, tiffin basket and cameras, and Goray Ray, a Nepalese, was to be cook-bearer. He was very thin, with a quizzical smile on his somewhat Chinese features, and I sent him on ahead to Rississum, our first stop, in order that he might have bath water ready for my arrival.

Tharchin led forward three Tibetan urchins, indicating them as my pony boys: Lhakrey, Phurbutsering and Bainig.

“But this is not a kindergarten, Tharchin,” I said. “They will have to walk all the way and could never keep up.”

“They are all good boys and strong,” he an-

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swered. "They never get tired. They live with me, and Lhakrey wants to go to Gyantse to visit his mother."

I started to reason that that was a poor excuse for taking the infant along, but Tharchin's humility was reënforced by determination, and he continued:

"Lhakrey is a good boy . . . his name means 'Gift of the Gods.'"

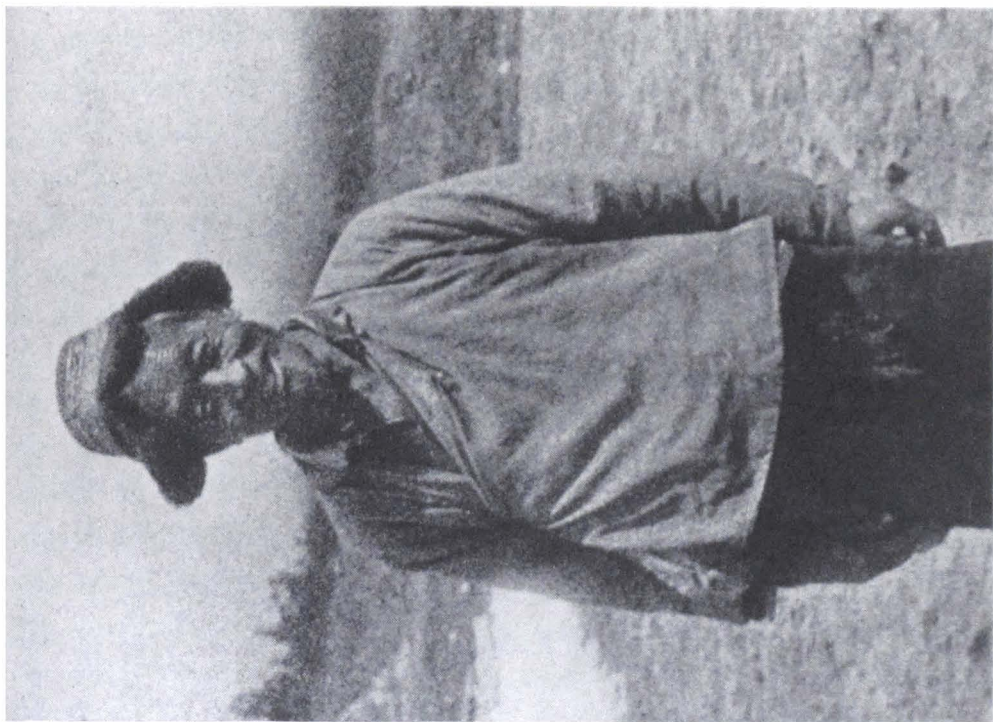
That settled the matter. Far be it from me to refuse a Gift of the Gods at the beginning of such a journey. Then, because every member of his household except his wife was in my bandobast, I asked Tharchin if she was to accompany us also. The reason he gave for her not doing so was that she was too busy.

When the loading was finished, Lobsang came forward and said: "I go to my farm and will join you at Rississum." With that he departed. I noted the absence of "Mem-sahib," nor was there the courteous form of Tibetan address "Kusho," still less that title of higher dignity, "La Chem Kusho." They had doubtless been told that I came from a land where all were equal, and did not know how to address me.

Hill folk do not suffer from an inferiority complex, and I was interested to discover how my men would address me. I found that they gave no title, and Tharchin waveringly called me "Madam," which lacked the atmosphere of "Mem-sahib" or



GOREY RAY: MY COOK-BEARER
NEPALESE



TSIGYALBU: MY HEAD MULEMAN
TIBETAN



RHANTARSA: MY BRAHMIN COOLIE
NEPALESE

THE START

“Hazoor” that seem so charming in India and Kashmir.

At last everything was ready. The pack mules went on ahead, and Lhakrey led forward a sullen-looking white horse that I timorously tried to make friends with. Timorously describes well my overtures to any horse; they are never fooled by it, and establish at once complete independence of me. This steed had a protruding underlip which I think must indicate the same characteristics in a horse that a square jaw denotes in humans; he had also pronounced curvature of the nose, and this I patted, calling him the good old Jewish name, “Melchusedek,” “Melli” for short. My mistake! He never forgave me. Indeed he seemed to brood over it as an injustice, as if he had been an Arabian thoroughbred. Often thereafter, and for no reason at all, he would stop and refuse to move forward a step until Tharchin’s voice provided the incentive.

The names and nicknames given animals and humans are somewhat of a gamble. I have always felt that, had I been called by some less solemn name, I might have escaped much of the surprise that the wanderings in space of a Henrietta seem to provoke.

An amusing incident occurred in my early married life when the most delightful of husbands failed to coax any sort of a nickname out of the dignified one I bear: and I suggested that, as men

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often named their boats and horses after their sweethearts, he might reverse the order, and call me by the pet name of his most-loved horse. Being a sportsman, with a particular love for horses, I was sure that he would second the motion. To my dismay and his expressed chagrin this was impossible because his favorite racer was "Baccarat."

On my first journey across the Himalaya, I had rejected several fine steeds because they were introduced as Firefly, Diabolo, and Mercury. I remembered this and ceased to wonder at the sensitiveness of Melli. I mounted him and was off with Lhakrey clinging to the bridle to reassure me that he was on hand for any emergency. As I reached the crest of the ridge, I exclaimed with elation: "Out there somewhere we'll ride the range, a-looking for the new and strange."

Lhakrey looked up at me wondering if I had given an order, and I remarked: "I just said, 'there's a grand time ahead!' " . . . This he understood as little as my first exclamation.

CHAPTER VI

SHEER BEAUTY

SEVERAL routes converge at the two passes into Tibet, the Jelep-Là and the Natu-Là. I planned to go in by the former and come out by the latter. All paths offered allurements, for this was Sikkim, the most beautiful state in all India. Nowhere else can one push through dense tropical jungle at sea level, and in a brief journey mount through a temperate zone to arctic regions where, from passes higher than Mt. Blanc, one may gaze across the most imposing mountains in the world.

Europe has no peaks higher than 15,784 feet, and only six or seven above fourteen thousand. But in the Himalaya there are more than eleven hundred which exceed twenty thousand feet above sea level, and several over twenty-five thousand feet high may be viewed from Sikkim. Two of the highest in the world can be seen at the same time, Everest 29,002 feet, and Kangchenjunga 28,150. So great is the pull of this mighty range that it draws the plumb line towards it, and actually pulls the sea several hundred feet up its sides. One literally sails up hill when entering the harbor of

SPOKEN IN TIBET

Calcutta. Atom that I am, how could I resist the upward, onward urge?

With all paths of equal beauty, I naturally took the one that seemed to offer most adventure. I had learned that off the beaten path, deep in the heart of the jungle where wild animals roamed, was a tiny, rarely-visited bungalow for the use of foresters, which was reputed to be haunted. Thinking this a most appropriate place for my first halt on the way into Tibet I had ordered my bandobast to meet me there, for never had I lived deep in the jungle, never had I passed a night where wild animals prowled, never had I been in a haunted house. A perfect orgy of new experiences awaited me.

For eight miles after leaving Kalimpong the road was good enough for wooden-wheeled ox carts, but as we proceeded dense undergrowth pressed close upon our path. Tharchin had caught up with me, and the coolies followed behind. Huge creepers wound their thick cables around birch and willow; vines trailed from branch to branch, mingling with floating streamers of gray moss; bamboos shot up in thick clumps, and tree ferns forty to fifty feet high fought their way to light among thick overhanging branches.

Close beneath the trees grew Jack-in-the-pulpit and small white violets. Mosses and exquisite maidenhair ferns carpeted the ground, and the path

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beneath my feet was strewn with the petals of wild orchids. From the branches and trunk of every tree they hung down, clustered like mammoth hyacinths on long stalks, their lips pale yellow or rich orange. There were varieties of red or rose, of lavender and purple and yellow rioting in a profusion of bloom and fragrance that are seen only in these Sikkim jungles, where four hundred and fifty species of orchids have been found, some of them extremely rare.

The air grew hot and steamy; birds were few, but butterflies flitted everywhere. More than six thousand species have been found in Sikkim, among them the Atlas moth, largest of the insect race. One felt the fierce struggle, the hidden life, the brooding sadness beneath the hush that was so different from the silence of the desert, or the vast desolation of the steppes, or the vague nothingness one experiences high above the clouds. A cuckoo called from the heart of the jungle; a pheasant crossed the path and lost itself in thick underbrush; a mild-featured Lepcha, remnant of the original inhabitants, passed . . . busy with his day dreams.

Fronds of ferns, some of them five yards long, brushed our faces as we passed, and right here my delight was tempered with reserve, for from off these gorgeous ferns dropped leeches, the pests of Sikkim. They are like thin black matches until they swell to the dimensions of a slug when gorged.

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Friends in Kalimpong had warned me of them, so I came prepared with small bags of salt tied to the ends of sticks, and with tobacco leaves folded in the scarf about my neck and in the cloth bands wound about my boot-tops. The tongues of these were stitched to prevent leeches from crawling through the eyelets, and I had also a sand-fly head-net which I did not have to use, however, as the leeches were few at the beginning of the rainy season. Yet in that one march the ponies' legs were dripping with blood.

The pony boys gathered armfuls of orchids and piled my saddle high with them. Thus laden I mounted over dead leaves and fallen tree trunks to the little clearing on a knoll where a wee dak bungalow stretched its front porch against a patch of garden that fenced it off from the jungle, while at its rear a steep drop fell into farther forest darkness.

The pack mules had been relieved of their burdens and driven down to Lobsang's farm, where it was easier to feed and water them. By the time I had removed travel stains it was dusk, and the chowkidar came to me and said:

"It is not safe for one to be on the porch alone in the dark. The leopards come even up here, and they have carried off dogs from before the door."

"But we may all sit out here together for awhile, may we not?"

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“It is safe so long as there are several people,” he answered.

I called my men about me after their evening meal. They came wrapped in blankets, as was I, for the night air was chill at six thousand four hundred feet. I gave them Battle Axe cigarettes which I had bought in the bazaar for them, and lit one of my own brand. The glowing tips looked like captive fireflies, and the moon swung up like a note of music through the branches of the forest.

Silently the natives faced me, respectfully waiting on the words of the strange mem-sahib who, they had been told, had journeyed through the air from England to India, after coming all the way from America, which was somewhere in the world outside their ken, and was now going alone into Tibet where there was surely less to be seen than was to be found in the bazaar of Kalimpong.

To make them feel at home with me I told them first about our big cities and tall buildings, elevated trains and subways, and how the world looked from an aëroplane. Sounds of incredulity escaped them, and I wondered if they thought I was telling fairy stories. When I felt that they were friendly I thought perhaps I might extract a ghost story from them, for spirits of the air are common topics of conversation in the Orient.

One old coolie, Chétri by name, was returning to Kalimpong next day. I had often seen him wan-

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dering about the gardens there absorbed in what William Beebe would call "periwinklish thoughts within his shell." He had brought supplies for the three-day halt in Rississum. I said to him:

"Why are you always smiling, Chétri? Are you happy?"

"I never have temper with any one. I have no enemies and no troubles," he answered.

"But what do you think about all day long?"

"Of my homeland, Nepal, and of my friends; whether they are happy. I have better luck than they."

"And have you ever met spirits, Chétri?"

"Yes, once I met spirits, many of them . . . the spirits of the dead. It happened many years ago in Nepal. I had gone into the fields to water them and stopped at the home of a friend to smoke and chat with him. My friend cooked me some rice and, as it had grown very late, advised me to pass the night at his house rather than walk home in the dark; but my wife was alone and I wanted to be with her, so I started for home at about eleven o'clock.

"I had got to a crossing when suddenly I heard a crackling like bamboo trampled on. It was beautiful moonlight and I was very happy. I turned and saw a white pony ridden by a man who was surrounded by a halo. Following him were hundreds of other ponies, each one ridden by a man.

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All were pure white. They streamed out behind the leader for miles. I fell unconscious.

“In my religion the Lamas blow through a trumpet made of a human bone and call all the souls of the dead to life; this they had done. I was long unconscious, and awoke hearing my mother’s voice. I crawled to the house and related the story to my people. Three days later I was taken very ill with fever and a witch doctor was called in. When my mother went to fetch him he said at once: ‘I know you want me to go to your son who is ill.’ This he knew by counting the grains of rice my mother handed him on a leaf. He went to the graveyard and collected ashes and bones and made a charm of them for me to wear. He told me never to look for it if it got lost. He said to me: ‘I read in your horoscope that you met the souls of all the dead. It was well with you because it was your lucky day; otherwise you would have been trampled to death.’ ”

“How did he tell your horoscope, Chétri?”

“To do this he had to get a witch into him. The Lamas can do this.”

As none of them seemed to be nervous about this discussion of spirits I asked the chowkidar if he believed that the bungalow was haunted.

“But it is well known,” he answered. “When it was being built all that was put up in the day was pulled down at night.”

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“But that might have been the work of animals?”

“No, it was done by the spirits; that is well known.”

Chétri's tale, told in a low, halting voice, had taken long. I was tired after the first, hot march, and when I dismissed them they crept away as silently as the mists that rolled up out of the far valley, spinning gossamer along the branches of the tree. Soon I heard the notes of a flute from the cook house where my men were huddled together, probably whispering more tales of witches and magic. With them was the Brahmin coolie Rham-tarsa, a handsome, proud-looking boy belonging, for all his humble calling and black rags, to the highest of the castes of India. He might sleep beside those of lower caste, but lest by chance one of them might have defiled him by a touch in his sleep, each one on awakening had always to touch his forehead to the foot of the exalted one. This “Brahmin Child,” as they called him, cooked for all the others, because he might not touch food prepared by one of lower caste. He lost no whit of dignity thereby. It was merely a practical arrangement that helped for a while a permanent financial depression; the others could not pay him, so they washed the pots and the gulf of caste was happily bridged.

I lay awake for some time. All was still in the jungle. Once I crawled from my sleeping bag and

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stood out under the stars near the back door of the bungalow. How futile seemed the verdict of science that we can have no knowledge of the Ultimate Reality in the face of such human experience of a pervading Presence.

The sun was high when I awoke next day. Goray was at my bedside with "chota hazri," and in the wash-room the chowkidar noisily prepared my bath. To have gone off the foot-paths into the jungle, as one is tempted to do, would have meant getting lost, so I followed the path when I was dressed and found a new-made grave deep in the woods. A knife and three copper coins lay upon it, and I piled it high with orchids. The caretaker held up his hands in dismay when I told him about it, and Tharchin translated:

"You went so far into the jungle alone? You must not."

"But it is day."

"Even then one must not go alone into the jungle. A man was mauled by a bear just by that grave only six weeks ago, and two men were killed near this bungalow a week ago, all in the daytime."

"I never even saw a bear," I said.

"One never knows. Sometimes one cannot tell them apart from the fallen trunks of trees by which they often sleep. It is never safe to go alone. If you should ever meet a bear you should fall at once

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on your face and pretend to be dead. They will try to roll you over to claw your eyes.”

I spent the afternoon near the dak bungalow, my feet hanging over the cliff beyond which the Kangchenjunga range spread in glorious panorama. It was silent in the jungle until the cicadas tuned up in full orchestra, then gave a pianissimo accompaniment to their first violin, and stopped abruptly as thunder rumbled among the distant peaks and the day faded into quick night. The time was ripe for ghosts and I went toward the bungalow and sat a while on the porch listening to the muted jungle sounds, to the strange whispering that never ceases, and conjuring ghosts and spirits of the air.

Suddenly my pulse quickened at a sound close by. A form loomed in the darkness and stole across the open space beside the bungalow. For a moment my heart pounded with fright and I was unable to move, for my first thought was that it was a leopard come for the dog. But through a momentary rift in the clouds the moon's rays struck full upon the spot and I saw a hooded form and recognized the wine-colored robe of a Lama who turned and, with the light full on his face, looked at me. All the Lamas I had previously seen were gross-looking, but there was a spirituality about this old man's face that was arresting. He made no sound; he gave no signal; but as he turned and disappeared into the jungle an irresistible impulse to

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follow him seized me. Strangely enough there was always just light enough to see the figure ahead of me; beyond that all was darkness.

I do not know how far into the jungle he led me, for he moved swiftly, and as swiftly I followed him, in some unaccountable way passing as noiselessly as he did over tree roots and fallen branches, for we had left the path and were deep in the woods.

Suddenly the Lama halted in a clearing and it grew light all about him, and I noted a few huts that were built up on bamboo posts, just as one sees them everywhere in the Philippine Islands. Bamboo ladders led up to them, and the roofs were thatched. But here was something that one does not see in the Philippines, a double fence set at some distance from the houses and between the fences were pigs and carabao, and along the innermost fence ashes were strewn thick and in a band at least a yard wide.

Then I saw the reason, for the beasts between the fences were dripping with blood all over their sides and heads where leeches were clinging; and towards me from the fence swayed innumerable black worm-like things, as these pests became aware of human proximity.

The Lama opened a gate and we passed through, and at the foot of the ladder we halted. From the house above a figure descended, clad in a cotton garment that was wound about his form, the end

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caught up across his shoulder. A single pigtail fell down his back and a knife hung from his waist, identical with the bolos of the Filipinos, and sheathed between two pieces of bamboo lightly bound with bamboo thongs. The man was of lighter build than any of my servants and of timid bearing and soft speech, and I recognized one of the gentle Lepchas.

He saluted the Lama with reverence, and stood aside while the latter mounted to the platform of the house. I followed, impelled by the same strange impulse that still held me. Then a woman came towards us; her hair was parted in the middle and fell in two long plaits on either side of her face. Her costume was not unlike that of the Kashmiri women, of homespun, hanging long and loose with upturned cuffs.

Wild honey was brought in a bowl of bamboo, and another bowl of berries, and on a bamboo platter were strange roots and fungi and frogs' legs. These things he pressed upon me and I ate and found them delicious. I forgot the Lama while I was eating: and when I looked up the Lepcha had vanished and it was only just light enough to discern the Lama, seated Buddha-fashion at some distance, immobile, withdrawn, utterly unconscious of the world around him. For what seemed to me a long time there was complete silence while I watched, fascinated. I began thinking of all the

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marvels that Mrs. L. Adams Beck has recounted in her books, and which she told me she knew of her own knowledge. . . . Just as I was growing restless the Lama spoke with a deep voice:

“There is no sin . . . only stages of development.”

Then there was silence. He had spoken in English which did not strike me as strange at the time, and only later made me realize that it must have been a direct message for me. When I no longer expected a sequel to the sentence I began to ponder it. I seemed to have read just those words in some book, or to have heard them before; but they had passed through my mind then without leaving any impression, just so many words heard in the noise of a busy life. Now they assumed significance. “No sin . . . only stages of development.” The words were repeated slowly by the Lama, as if to further impress me with their importance. That accounted for the inequalities of life better than any other reasoning. The different equipment for life of the people one knew, just stages of development; some blossoming into rich fruit fullness, ripe for wider experience and fuller development; others barren of all chance, so incomplete, so futile . . . stages of development.

A long time we sat there while the words burnt themselves into my brain so that I knew that I should never forget them. Then suddenly the

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Lama rose, descended the bamboo ladder, and I followed, this time more swiftly, unconscious of my steps. At the edge of the clearing on which stood the bungalow he vanished, and I sat down and leaned heavily against the side of the bungalow.

“They must have earned it,” I found myself thinking of those I knew who had seemed to have more than their share of joy. And of others who had been visited with quite undeserved sorrow I found a chance for victory that, without such suffering, they could never have achieved . . . a stage of development. Surely not “just one short life and then eternity.” It is difficult to believe that the sorry sheaf of values one has chance to accumulate in so short a time is the end of the story.

Whether I dozed after that I do not know, but I roused myself and went into the bungalow and was soon huddled down in my sleeping bag.

CHAPTER VII

THERE WAS A VISION

THE moon was full and high, and it was cold and clear when we loaded to resume the journey. The mules came up before dawn, but without Lobsang whose farm was by Pedong which we had to pass. Tsigyalbu announced that he did not know whether Lobsang intended to go with me or not and I determined to rout him out at Pedong.

Birds were stirring as we dropped down the steep bridle-path into the forest. The chowkidar had advised us to wait until daylight before entering the jungle, on account of wild animals: and we kept together, the tinkling bells of the pack-mules being sufficient to frighten any prowling beast.

Lhakrey pointed to a bowlder by the path whereon was the imprint of a human foot. Tharchin translated:

“The footstep of the Holy One.”

“The Buddha?” I asked.

“Of Padma Sambhava, the saint, who traveled all over Tibet preaching long, long ago.”

“But that was a very long time ago,” I said.

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“Yes,” answered Lhakrey, “and the rocks were then soft so that his foot sank in. The rock grew hard later.”

A red-throated lizard eyed me suspiciously and scolded when I lingered too long over my inspection, and I moved on through beautiful silence.

The road led to a causeway of rock, along which we descended to Pedong, where was Lobsang, the one strong man I had counted on for what I conceived to be a most difficult journey. When we had talked of the sharp drop off the summit of the Jelep-Là into Tibet, he had described the terror of one man and told how he had carried him down on his back. “I could carry you and the pony too,” he had said to me.

He came towards me across a wide field, walking briskly, but complained then that his foot hurt him and said he would not go on unless I mounted him also and bought him new shoes. Realizing that his attitude was due to the influence of the servant I had discharged, I refused to alter the terms of our written contract. As he was obdurate I left him behind . . . the man who would never let me down. But mindful of the Lama’s lesson, I tried to think of it as just a stage of development.

The road from Pedong was too steep and rough to permit riding. It dropped from forty-six hundred to two thousand feet, then ascended through bamboo woods, where we met pack trains laden

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with wool from Tibet. The right of way always belongs to the ascending pack train, and they pressed back against the lush green of the forests as we passed. Ali Baba and the forty thieves should have been leading them. The mules had great red tassels swung from their ears; deep-toned square bells clanked under their chins, and small round ones jingled around their necks; their foreheads were bound with strips of embroidered felt, and their tiny hoofs were shod with the thinnest of metal. But these mules hear no encouraging, friendly cry from the muleteers; no solicitous "Kabardar," "Take care," as in Kashmir. The harsh command "Chu, chu, chu" starts them off and spurs them on when they would lag, and they halt at long last to the harsher but more welcome cry of "Dush."

Tibetans exchange no word of greeting with those they meet on the road. The lowliest ones instead stick out their tongues. It is related that this custom originated during the religious wars, when the red sect lamas had power to cast spells from great distances by means of the simple recitation of mantras. Their oft-repetition of these malevolent spells turned their tongues black, it is said, so in order to detect their enemies, the opposing yellow-cap lamas forced all captives to show their tongues, that those found to have black ones might be put to death. The voluntary showing of the tongue is

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intended to prove that they are not hostile. Sometimes an inferior will push his left ear forward with his hand in sign of humility when addressing a superior. This too is a survival of the days when the ears of prisoners were cut off by successful generals and offered to their rulers as tribute. But the most frequent greeting in Tibet is the quick raising of folded hands to the forehead, a gracious if not a graceful gesture.

The muleteers we met were stripped to the waist, for it was hot in the valley where the cliffs caught and held the heat; the closeness and the evaporation of water made a suffocating atmosphere for those who had come down off the high mountains. Their felt boots were gay with red and green embroidery, and were slit behind and wound with long wool garters. The soles were of woven cord or raw yak hide. All of them wore turquoise earrings. Indeed, among Tibetans the belief is widespread that a person who has not pierced ear lobes will be born in the next life as a donkey.

The road wound endlessly up and down, until we reached Ari, at forty-seven hundred feet, where the old-fashioned bungalow had a big bay window overlooking the ranges. Orange curtains and hanging flower baskets made it seem homelike, but when I looked for literature the only sign of it was "The Melody of Death," by Edgar Wallace. I thought it would be more interesting to talk to my

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men, and wandered on to the back porch where they were cleaning harness.

“Phurbutsering,” I said to the nearest pony-boy. “Tharchin tells me that you ran away from home.”

“My father is dead. My mother was unkind to me. I wanted to get into another country.” He was scratching his ear instead of pushing it forward. On inspection I found it to be infected, and the sore yielded to my daily dressings only after three weeks.

Lhakrey, the little fellow who habitually kept beside my horse on the road, looked up with a quick smile that invited my request that he tell me more of the things, the stories, of the country that he seemed to know so much about. Without hesitation he began a long and perhaps not too interesting tale, that I give as indicative of the sort of stories that they themselves revel in.

“Once there lived a rich man and a poor man. The house of the rich man was above that of the poor man, and he owned an ox while the poor man had only a cow. The cow had a calf one day while the ox was grazing in a field below it, and the newly born calf fell down near it. The rich man claimed that his ox had borne a calf. They quarreled about it and finally went to the magistrate. The rich man went ahead on a pony to get the magistrate’s ear first, but the poor man walked, and on his way met a jackal whom he asked to be witness for him.

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“The jackal was a long time arriving at the trial, and when he came he gave as his reason for delay that he had passed a river on fire, and had stopped to eat the fishes that were burning up. The magistrate exclaimed: ‘How foolish. Whoever heard of a river on fire?’ to which the jackal replied: ‘How can an ox give birth to a calf?’ And the magistrate awarded the calf to the poor man.”

There was a four-mile descent over a rock causeway from Ari; it was so rough that riding was impossible. Suddenly at a bend of the road the very heavens seemed to open, and the stupendous vision of the whole Kangchenjunga range rising to unbelievable heights into the sky, lay before us, gray in its shadows, rose where the dawn touched its peaks. It was as if all the fine courage of the universe, every noble deed and high aspiration had been caught up and visibly perpetuated.

Tharchin spoke at my elbow:

“There is said to be a book held in one of the monasteries in Tibet which contains the story of Kangchenjunga. It tells of five treasures that lie buried under the mountain, and relates that on the appointed day the right person will discover them. He alone may lift the stone under which lies the key that will open the door to the treasure chamber. And therein will be found a map showing the only possible ascents to Kangchenjunga and Everest. The book says also that there will be a famine all

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over the world, and that everything necessary to relieve the sufferings of men will come out of Kangchenjunga.”

“Do you believe these things, Tharchin?” I asked.

“It is so related. Who can say?” was the answer.

Reluctantly I turned away from the vision that was worth having come half across the world to see, and our path skirted steep banks above a dashing stream, then wound through woods where one could cut corners by descending over tree roots while the ponies were led down the zigzag rock causeway. Then came a steep flight of rock steps to descend, a river to ford, and a steep climb on the other side before we made a halt at Rongli, where I opened my tiffin basket and had tea and jam, while the mules were led to the bazaar for fodder. Ponies were given three seers of grain and grass, and mules two of each per day.

From my vantage point on the veranda of the dak bungalow, I watched the pack trains winding down the zigzag mountain trail with their huge bales of wool from Tibet, and all too soon I had to take the road again, making slow headway over upturned rocks along a path high above a river that dashed down in waterfalls.

The scenery grew grander and yet more grand as we ascended, and there, flung high into the sky, was the far-distant, snow-covered peak of the Jelep-Là

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over which we would so soon wend our way into Tibet.

My boots had been soaked in castor oil, and were pliable and waterproof, and I invariably rubbed vaseline into my feet each morning, but the rough stones, upended, loose and pointed, were a torture: and when Lingtam at four thousand feet was reached I sank onto the doorstep of a Tibetan hut while the mulemen took on more grain and another mule for the steeper climb.

Lingtam is only a mule caravanserai, and from there it was a steady uphill climb to nine thousand, five hundred feet at Sedonchen, where a dak bungalow overhangs a cliff facing the snow ranges.

We had climbed steadily for ten hours on foot, over a road that would have taken first prize for torture in the days of the Inquisition. It was exhausting for the animals as well as ourselves, and I was so stiff that I had to hold over for three days at Sedonchen before I could walk, and then only after constant strenuous rubbing with Elliman's Embrocation.

The view from Sedonchen is said to be one of the most magnificent in the world, and each day at dawn I slid out of my sleeping bag, hoping for a glimpse of the snows which is often had at dawn before the mists obscure the view. But day after day it rained. From a rear window of the bungalow I used to watch Tsigyalbu and Lhatuk groom-

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ing their mules. And often I saw them bending under huge loads of grass, as they climbed up from the village with fodder for their animals. My men hung around the compound of the bungalow, though there must have been places in the village where they might have gone to drink. I would hear murmured tales, or the sound of a flute, but never noisy laughter.

At night the mulemen and pony boys wrapped themselves in the canvas sheets taken from my loads, and slept in their clothes. They were not hardened to discomfort, but born to it, and somehow survived the penetrating chill that drove me early into my sleeping bag where I was none too warm with flannel pajamas and fur-lined sleeping socks.

Every one in the village came to visit me during my three days' halt. Among them a cheery Lama who sat on the porch before my room and cast dice onto a piece of brown cloth, which was decorated with Tibetan characters, to tell my fortune. He rolled a rosary between his palms, mumbled incantations, and read from a much-worn book. I was asked to place my finger at random on a letter upon its page; then he said that I would live long, that my body was of the wood element, and my soul of the iron element, which meant great strength.

I asked him if Buddhists believed in Jesus Christ, and he answered:

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“To us He is another incarnation. Such Holy Ones appear all over the world when there is need.”

“I have heard strange things about the powers of your Holy Men, Kusho,” I said. “Is it true that they can transport themselves through the air?”

“That is entirely a matter of controlling the breathing,” he said. “A man who knows how can so lighten his body that he may rise above the earth.” I have since read that when Friar Oderic went to Tibet in 1328 he found many priests who performed acts differing little, in their miraculous character, from those recorded of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HEART-BREAKING CLIMB WENT ON . . .

UP TO THE SNOWS

AS soon as I was able to walk, we took the road once more at dawn, in a heavy rainstorm. The tendons in my legs still felt as if they would snap with each step, but I was limber enough to climb. I managed to get thoroughly wet despite waterproof boots and slicker and with a cold wind driving off the snows it was uncomfortable going.

The rock ladder rose zigzag through a forest of great oaks, chestnuts, and rhododendrons, the latter full tree size and a mass of red and purple bloom, but badly damaged by hail-storms.

The pack mules slipped and often got stuck between boulders and had to be pulled out by the men. I hoped to hear them call "Yak pu chi"—"Be careful," or "Kali kali giu"—"Go slowly," which would have been picturesque: but no; ever and always "Chu, chu, chu."

Vultures hovered over a dead mule by the path; mists swirled up from the valley; views were obliterated in the heart-breaking climb on and on to Lingtu at thirteen thousand nine hundred feet, an

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ascent of ten thousand feet in fifteen miles from Lingtam. Weight must be in bone and muscle for climbing at high altitude. Fat, especially over the heart, would make such grades impossible. I carried a hundred and fifteen pounds with a height of five feet seven inches, and wore the lightest of woolen clothes. Even the burden of a vest pocket camera was unbearable.

Lingtu, now only a sleepy mule caravanserai, was the place where the encroachments of the Tibetans led to the Mission to Lhasa in 1904. And now I understand that caravanserai comes from caravan-serai, a serai, or stabling place for caravans. It was more interesting still to realize that these were the first hotels; that traders were the first travelers; and that provision was thus made to take care of their caravans as well as to afford them a place to rest and sleep at intervals along the trade routes. The serais consist of a wide open space often with mud troughs for beasts, and around this are rooms, usually open in front, with dirt floors, and guiltless of furniture.

The road forked at Lingtu. I had been advised to take the longer one to escape the frequent landslides that endangered the short cut, which, for miles, runs along a steep precipice, with a wall of rock rising on the inner side. There were said to be dangerous snowdrifts also, and a forced detour would mean, of necessity, a steep climb up the cliff.

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But at Lingtu I learned that mules had come over the short cut the day before. If they could make it surely we could, and with every step torture I favored any cut that would get us to the next resting place more quickly. So we mounted through snow to the short cut, and crossed the Pemberingo Pass, a bleak hilltop covered with snow and swept by a high cold wind that drove the never-ceasing rain down our necks and up our sleeves. At least we could ride part of the way, but were soaked and nearly frozen when, on descending from the pass to twelve thousand three hundred feet we reached Gnatong, that lay in a swampy bowl between bleak hills.

I had sent Goray Ray on ahead as usual to make fires, and the boys were told to strip and rub themselves before the blaze in the cook-room, and to each I gave aspirin and a thimbleful of brandy. With this precaution at the end of every day, they came through the entire journey without illness.

Arrived at Gnatong, I needed the assistance of Goray and the chowkidar to help me out of my slicker and coat. Then I reveled in a too scanty tub of hot water placed before the open fire in my room. The concrete floor of the wash-room, and the drafts there, eliminated its usefulness. What a boon a full-length tub would have been, instead of the too-narrow round one, where one had to scoop water up in a tin cup and throw it over one's back.

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Even that civilized habit I rarely indulged in thereafter, content usually with a sponge-off and a promise to treat myself to greater luxury . . . some other time. I saw virtue in the layers of dirt which keep Tibetans warm. The great unwashed people! And why not? No wood for fuel; yak dung for fires, and this necessarily preserved for cooking; rivers few in number and frozen during long months; how could one bathe, much less wash one's clothes?

How desolate the village of Gnatong, that sheltered only nine families! Not more than seventy people in all, with not even one dog in the community! The flat roofs of the low huts are held down by numerous stones; and along the bleak hill-top are many crosses, for there, in the lonely graveyard, lie British soldiers. They do not dance or sing in Gnatong, and are abed by eight o'clock and up at dawn.

I could not sleep at all that first night. The minute I lay down I struggled to breathe and my heart labored heavily. I got up and sat in a chair, dosing myself at intervals with aspirin and chlorate of potash, and breaking ammonia tubes into my handkerchief. This was "la-druck," the poison of the pass, the work of "Noi-jins," a Tibetan would have said, attributing to evil spirits the effects of too rarefied air.

I had climbed a steep grade for hours at an unac-

THE HEART-BREAKING CLIMB

customed altitude, and yet did not suffer serious handicap, nor did my men. I attribute this partly to the fact that we were all very fit, and also to a generous use of cathartics. I never had a vestige of headache, and mindful of General Bruce's advice, I dosed my men every few days with castor oil. How they hated that formation in line while each one swallowed the tablespoonful that I held out.

CHAPTER IX

NOT SO BAD . . . THE FEAT OF HANNIBAL

AT dawn, by the light of a high moon, we started for the last stage of our journey through Sikkim to Kupup, which lay at the foot of the Jelep Pass. New-fallen snow obliterated the path, and it was bitter cold. All of my men now wore snow-glasses to avoid blindness from long hours of exposure to glare.

It was not possible to ride, for the ponies kept slipping to their knees in holes, and it was impossible to keep to the path which zigzagged up and down the mountain, and was completely blanketed. Old landslips, grass-grown and snow-covered, left often the merest foothold along embankments, but strangely enough, as soon as I took the road I found breathing easier; and by stopping every few yards to get my breath, I had no great difficulty in pulling uphill. The grades along this portion of the road were not so steep, and after eight hours of climbing without a halt, we came to the tiny dak bungalow of Kupup.

Here, besides the rest house, were only a mule serai, and a dak-runner's hut. And here Namgaye,

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an extra coolie that Tharchin had recommended me to take to Gyantse, joined up. Namgaye had served under Tharchin in the printing shop of the Tibetan Mission, and was to have lost his job, so that the time spent in my employ gave him two months' wages. He was said to be strong, and, having lost Lobsang, I was delighted to add him to my outfit.

Weather deserving of the Croix-de-Guerre held us for three days at Kupup, as desolate a spot as Gnatong, with neither trees nor flowers, nor animals of any sort. Each dawn found me peering out of the door to see if it would be possible to start; but always I was greeted with rain and snow that made an attempt to cross the steep pass ill-advised. I would climb back into my sleeping bag and try to forget the desolation about me by reading some small volumes I had brought with me, William Beebe's "Jungle Peace" and the short stories of Katherine Mansfield.

Tharchin kept the men amused with field sports when it cleared in the afternoons, too late to make the pass. It was hard then to realize that I was in a foreign land, for the events were those familiar to every schoolboy in America.

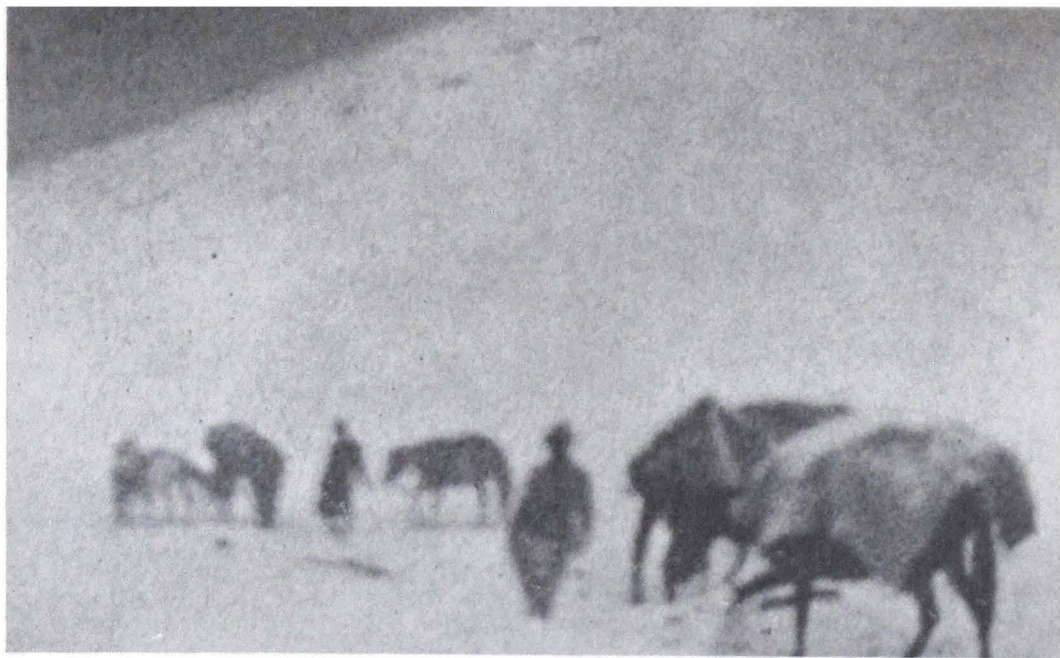
By that time Vanity was a forgotten thing. The last wave had left my hair, and the last glint had long since departed from my fingernails. My face had been saved from blistering because, after wash-

SPOKEN IN TIBET

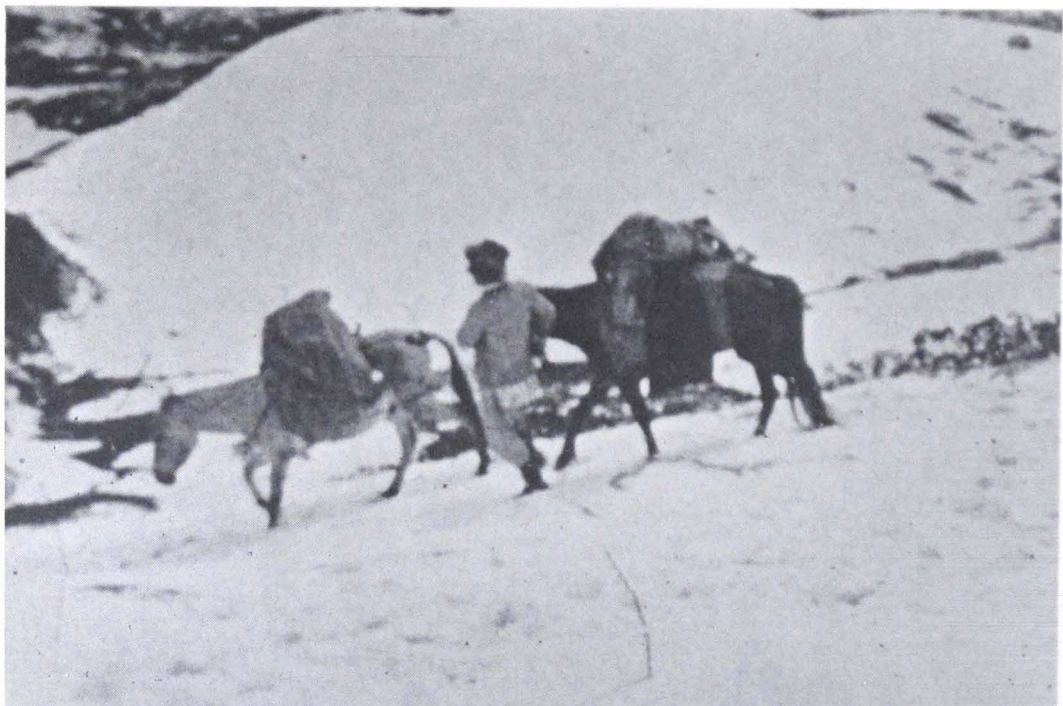
ing it in ice water each morning, and coating it with liquid powder, I spread it thick with cold cream at the end of each day's journey. There was no one to exchange symptoms with, and I was glad not to have to listen to how uncomfortable some one else might be.

I had promised the British Trade Agent that I would arrive in Yatung, the other side of the Jelep Pass, in Tibet, on May tenth, and leave there on a specified date, in order to escape running into the inspection party that was coming in over the Natu Là. So when that date arrived and I still saw no chance of fair weather, I got out of my sleeping bag at two o'clock in the morning and woke the men and said to Tharchin: "It's impossible to hold over longer. We must cross today." He shook his head dubiously at the prospect of marching eighteen miles in such weather. Waiting had not helped matters. The snow had piled higher, and a steady drizzle of rain promised slippery going over the high-flung pass. This was the pass of which Colonel Waddell had written: "Hannibal crossing the Alps was a mere bagatelle compared to General Macdonald's crossing the Jelep Pass." And he remarked that then there was no snow. I wondered just how much worse it was going to be for my little outfit, with paths obliterated, and the ground many inches deep under snow.

The mules, tethered in front of the bungalow,



MY PACK TRAIN MAKING ITS WAY ACROSS THE JELEP-LÀ, 14,390 FT., INTO TIBET



THE MULES OFTEN WERE UP TO THEIR KNEES IN SNOW

NOT SO BAD—FEAT OF HANNIBAL

drooped their heads. We were all in sorry mood and Tharchin remarked:

“It will be difficult to get across in weather like this.”

“Ask Tsigyalbu if it *can* be done,” I said. The old muleteer shook his head, but smiled and answered:

“I think we can get through if the blizzard gets no worse, but it will be hard going.”

“Tell him to load at once and let’s get started. It will be worse every day that we delay.”

What a dreary spectacle my little caravan made as it mounted ever steeper grades, slipping on stones and into the snowdrifts. I and my men were up to our knees in snow, and a high wind drove sleet into our eyes. Mists soon blotted out all but the short stretch ahead, and a heavy snow-storm soon turned into a howling blizzard. The mules seemed to know the unseen path by instinct, and we followed them. Once I stopped and called the camera coolie to me, and with numb fingers unbuckled the straps of the canvas cover that protected it. While my pony boy held an umbrella to cover it, I tried to catch the impression of my little band in that desolation.

Some men passed, looking like walking haystacks as they bent under loads of fodder brought down across the high pass from the forests of the Chumbi Valley just across the range in Tibet, to

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the treeless, grassless regions on the Sikkim side of the range.

For the rest of the way it was just a heart-straining, breath-taking climb at zigzag over slippery loose stones hidden under snow, or pulling one's feet out of deep drifts only to sink into another one at the next step. A weary climb. No chance to rest. One could not sit down in the snow, and there was not even a boulder behind which one might hide from the wind or lean upon; yet one had to halt for breath every few minutes. All that was written about the strain on heart and lungs, pulling up at such altitudes, was true. I was able to make the grade simply because I was so fit. I was dripping with perspiration from the exertion, but chilled the minute I stopped moving. We were covered with snow as we climbed up and up until we reached the ridge, where a cairn with prayer flags floated above the water-shed . . . the top of the Jelep-Là, 14,390 feet above sea level.

It had been strenuous, but not in the least as I had pictured it. There were eleven of us all told, my men and I, and not one of us had mountain sickness. My men, hardened to such conditions and familiar with the trail, came through smiling and I had not suffered more than discomfort. I think perhaps the main value of reading about the horrors of a journey is that it rarely seems as bad as one has pictured it to be.

NOT SO BAD—FEAT OF HANNIBAL

The trail, such as it was, had been prepared for the passage of the British army in 1904 and in the twenty-seven years following no repairs had been made, so it was unspeakably bad; yet it is, I think, probable that the descent was easier as I made it, in deep snow, than when an army let itself down over boulders.

On the crest we paused for breath, but not too long in that driving wind. Just long enough to sense the mysteries of the Forbidden Land of Tibet which lay beyond, cloaked in cloud and snow.

There was a drop of four thousand feet in six miles from the top of the pass. Mindful of the danger of halting, we slid and slipped down, going sideways along the mountain where the grade is one in two, and one in three. The pack mules with somewhat lightened loads, because of extra transport animals taken on at Lingtam, were helped down by the mulemen, and the riding ponies were carefully watched by the other boys. Deep snow hid what might otherwise have been terrifying drops; one could slide when the grade made walking difficult.

Some trouble was experienced when we struck ice-covered rivulets hidden in the drifts of snow, but one came to the help of the other who might be in temporary difficulty; and it was really glorious fun, and for the most part my khud stick, dug in, held while I felt for the next foothold. It was a relief

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to heart, and lungs, and muscles to be going down hill. My slicker broke a fierce wind, and my high fur-lined boots kept my feet warm. I felt little discomfort.

We skirted a glacial lake, and passed the old Chinese posting station of Langram, where we stopped long enough to eat. From there a stony track grew worse and worse, the pointed, loose stones making every step a thing to be ventured with caution.

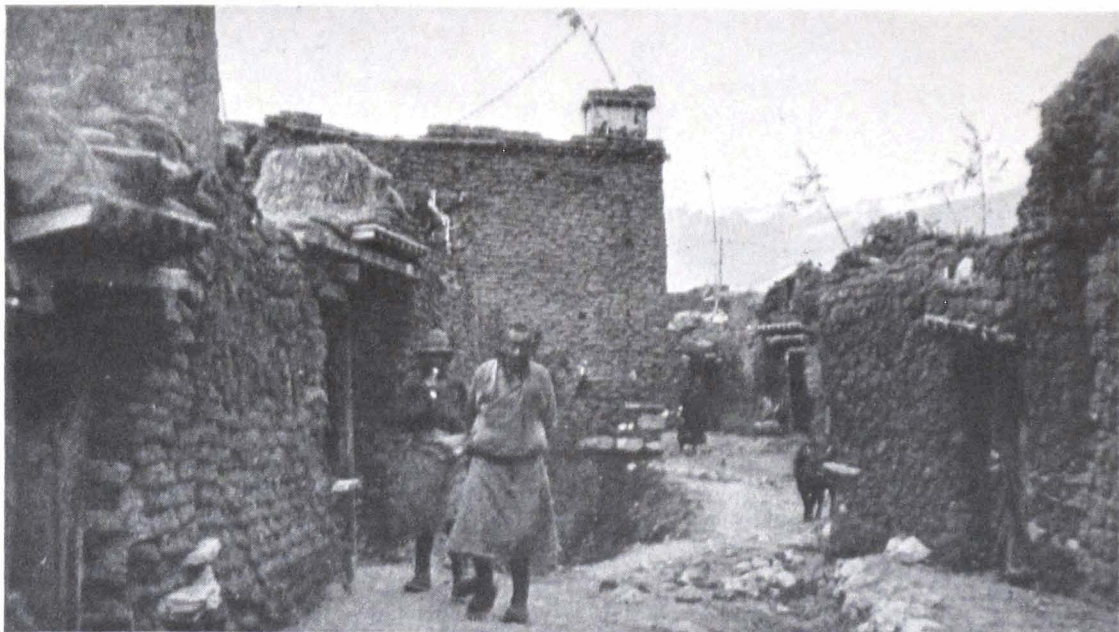
Soon we entered a forest where every single tree had been struck by lightning. I could not even imagine the storms that had wrought such desolation. But when, six months later, I was flying, the sole passenger, in a tiny Fokker plane from Basle to Paris, and the whole sky about us was rolled into angry clouds rent with jagged streaks, I could picture a little what it might have been in a storm that had torn part of the world asunder down in Tibet.

It soon grew so hot, shut in the woods, that I changed to light weight garments, which I always kept at hand in the duffle bag that one of the coolies carried. Then life became just an endurance test. Time after time I would call to Tharchin:

“How many miles to Yatung?”

When first he answered: “Ten miles,” I fairly wailed:

“I simply cannot make it.”



IN PHARI HOUSES ARE MADE OF SOD CUT FROM THE PLAIN



THE WRITER CROSSING THE JELEP-LÀ, 14,390 FT., IN A BLIZZARD

NOT SO BAD—FEAT OF HANNIBAL

“But you cannot spend the night on the mountain without shelter,” he argued.

“My feet are so sore that I can hardly take a step, and I was never so exhausted in my life. Every bone in my body aches,” I exclaimed, and then: “Could I not ride now?”

“It is impossible. The ponies stumble at every step; look, they have to be held up by the boys.” It was too true.

A rest, sitting on the trunk of a tree! Then another effort! The periods of rest grew longer than the advances. After what seemed a very long time, again:

“How many miles *now*?”

“About nine.”

“Why, we’ve been walking at least an hour since I last asked you that,” I gasped.

So we kept on and on. There were bowlders now that one might rest on. I dragged blistered feet through the town of Rinchingong with its gayly painted window frames actually set with glass. Then the village of Chumbi, and a level road, and my horse carried me to the outskirts of Yatung.

CHAPTER X

GREETINGS FROM THE "PRECIOUS GOLDEN EAR"

THEIR little jackets were of pink brocade, with flowing robes of blue beneath; they looked altogether ready for a part in some gorgeous musical production, those solemn little men who had but the rôle of messenger to play to the British Trade Agent, commonly spoken of as the B.T.A., but more solemnly addressed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Lhasa, in letters, as "The Precious Golden Ear."

At the outskirts of Yatung one came to me and presented a letter of welcome from the British official. It expressed his regrets that he would be absent for the day, and announced that a hot lunch awaited me at his residence, and also invited me to come for tea and for dinner that day.

After traveling for ten hours and covering eighteen miles on foot without more than brief halts to catch my breath, I welcomed a good lunch, and was still more grateful for the hot bath and bed in the bungalow. And there I rested until time to dress for that delightful late dinner that is customary everywhere in the Orient, where servants do not

GREETINGS FROM "GOLDEN EAR"

expect to rush out to movies, but smilingly serve one at eight or nine o'clock.

A dinner dress seemed a bit incongruous in Tibet, and it was amusing to ride horseback in it with my skirt tucked up about my knees, which were covered with a coat tied on about my waist by its sleeves. And then, in no indefinite manner, Melli displayed his real feelings for me, and this temporary separation from his stable mates. As I mounted he reared, and finding to his astonishment, and my own, that I was still aboard when he came down, he reversed the play and nearly sent me over his nose to the ground. Tharchin and Lhakrey clung to his bridle and finally got him started, walking on either side of him, still holding to the bridle, until I slid off in front of the home of the B.T.A. where I told Melli what I thought of him and received an ugly look in reply. On the way home by lantern-light, he was no more amiable and would, I am sure, have rolled me off had he not calculated that the rocks in the path would injure him more than they would me. I transferred to Tharchin's horse thereafter.

A dinner in Tibet! I expected scraps of this and that, and feasted instead on nightingales' tongues and sharks' fins washed down with ambrosia, and in company with good companions.

Nice lazy days in Yatung. The B.T.A. discussed the advisability of naming the village lanes.

SPOKEN IN TIBET

We thought Piccadilly Circus would do well for the regular beat of a picturesque beggar, and Bond Street seemed quite fitting for the space in front of the two little shops. After all he concluded that it might be too ambitious, and left travelers to find their way in the maze of two streets.

One of the finest memories of my journey was accentuated in Yatung, where I had time to study my men more closely.

I had often watched the old muleteer, Tsigyalbu, trudging beside his mules, his hands joined behind his back, on his face the expression of one withdrawn as into some inner region where he might be in communion with the Guardian Deity that every Tibetan is provided with. His battered, fur-trimmed hat was usually pushed back from a heavily-wrinkled brow; his homespun robe, with a one-time white garment beneath, was travel-stained; his feet, often bared to the sharp stones, were seamed with deep cuts. I had dressed and bandaged them for him on several occasions.

Tsigyalbu seemed old for his fifty-one years. His small eyes became mere slits, but bright and twinkling when he smiled, as he always did, in response to my greeting. A few long hairs drooped from the corners of his mouth and he fondled his sparse goatee now as I spoke to him:

“Come and talk to me, Tsigyalbu. I have bad news. The B.T.A. tells me that I must send you

GREETINGS FROM "GOLDEN EAR"

back from here; that it would cause trouble if I took my own pack mules through to Gyantse. Last week the men at Phari started to fight a pack train going through; they want the money, and the B.T.A. wants to avoid trouble."

"They cannot stop us."

"Even if you got through, they could cut off all grain supply along the road, he says."

"We can fight if they want to," Tharchin translated.

"You are old to fight, Tsigyalbu. There are too few of us, and only Lhatuk and Namgaye are strong enough to put up a good fight. Besides, the officer wants to avoid a fight, and I do not want to cause trouble for him. I must take his advice, and comply with his request that I send you back from here, unless perhaps he will let you go on as far as Phari and possibly get a load of wool from there. Of course I'll pay your way home; you and Lhatuk have been most faithful."

Tharchin translated. The answer was: "The Madam will do the right thing."

I asked if he had a family that he must leave to make these long journeys and he answered:

"One must work to keep a family. I have two sons and two daughters. I first had a wife who bore no children; we talked it over and she said: 'If you wish to take another I will go.' Had she been willing, I might have brought a second wife

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into the house, such is our custom. But I gave her half of my property and sent her back to her family. The new wife bore me four children, the oldest not yet thirteen.”

He paused, and a look of tenderness crept into his face as he added: “I have also an old father. He is eighty-four. There is something warm in my heart for him. I feel as one does when wrapped in a warm garment when I think of him. I love to serve him. When he dies I shall feel cold and lonely in my heart.”

In the flux of a monotonous existence, Tsigyalbu had grown a rare personality, although his life had but the background of an isolated village with its restricted interests, its petty gossip, its scanty pleasures, its daily grind. He had an impressive dignity and a friendliness that was without hint of familiarity. I felt that I wanted to have him for a friend; that I could learn much if I could sit often with him and listen.

Many a time during the journey I had cause to wonder about the Tibetans. What had thus far impressed me most about the others I had met, apart from their universal and uncalled-for cheerfulness, was the blankness of their expressions; the utter absence of living in their faces; the look of yesterdays that bore no interest, of years that had bestowed nothing, of tomorrows that could bear no harvest because no seed was being planted in their

GREETINGS FROM "GOLDEN EAR"

today's. They all seemed to have drunk only the dregs, without ever having tasted one little drop of the wine of life. They were completely outside of its swift race; untouched by its beautiful intensities. I could not picture one of them as having lived even one mad, glad hour, for their faces registered neither dreams nor fulfillments. But as I judged them thus there came to me the appreciation of Tsigyalbu who knew tenderness and reverence . . . and who had his dreams. And I think, people's dreams matter as much as their accomplishments.

"What of your future," I asked him.

"I am too old to think of a future for myself. But I try to rear my children so that they may do better in life than I have done." The most modern of thoughts. But then, when I commended the care he gave his mules, he said: "The beasts serve me well. It is my duty to care for them. If a muleman neglects his beasts, he will be born as a mule himself in his next life."

"Do you really believe that?"

"So it is spoken. Who can say?" was the answer.

CHAPTER XI

FRIENDLY AND UNFRIENDLY SCENERY

“THAT’S the Jelep-Là.”

Tharchin pointed to where, in a rift between high, dark mountains, one snow-white peak ran up higher than the green-covered ranges. We were trekking at dawn up the Chumbi Valley, a strip of Tibet wedged in between Sikkim and Bhutan. The altitude was nine thousand six hundred feet. I had turned in my saddle to gaze up at the beautiful snow peak lifted so high into the sky above the rest of the range, and at Tharchin’s remark I exclaimed:

“And to think that *I* came down over *that!*” It seemed incredible, for it looked as sheer and as formidable and as much of a knife-edge as writers had described it, and I felt . . . well, perhaps not such an insignificant thing for having gone over it.

Prayer flags fluttered from long poles. A large Buddha was painted on an overhanging rock. Bushes of wild roses lined the path. And this was Tibet . . . the Barren Land! It lacked the impressiveness of the sudden transition from the verdant Vale of Kashmir to the austerity that lay

FRIENDLY—UNFRIENDLY SCENERY

across the Zoji-Là, at the far western end of the range.

We were traversing a delightful country lane. Beside it ran the crystal waters of the Amo Chu, that laughed as it fell in cascades down hill, or churned angrily against the obstacles in its path before settling peacefully into deep green pools. Fields were sown with buckwheat, barley, turnips and potatoes, for the Chumbi Valley is relatively fertile. The inhabitants are a race called Trosos and number between three and four thousand. The faces that greeted us so cheerfully were like fragments of parched earth. The women had theirs covered with kutch, a brown stain originally ordered by the authorities to lessen their attractiveness for the Lamas. One could not imagine one of them possessed of the quality which drives men a little bit mad. They had no mystery; there was no message in a single passing face; one never experienced that tug of interest and enchantment that makes one turn to look back, and wonder . . . and sometimes follow.

There are no fakirs or holy men in Tibet; no sadhus with matted hair and bodies covered with ashes holding out begging bowls; none of the frenzy of religion that holds one spellbound down in India. I found it difficult to picture cheery, unimaginative Tibetans meditating: "What am I? Whence have I come? Whither am I going?" Nor were there

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snake charmers, or jugglers, or potters twirling their large wheels . . . none of the vivid, picturesque life of the plains is found in Tibet.

We turned off the path and climbed steeply up to the Lingmatan monastery where I was cordially welcomed by the Lamas, shown the treasures of the place, and given tea. I had sent Tharchin on ahead to announce my visit, and the whole gompa turned out to greet me, the Lamas smiling and bowing as they escorted me into the main courtyard, and then up the wide steps through an elaborately painted doorway hung with curtains of black cloth. On each side were long, soft cylinders covered with leopard skin and tasseled at each end. These, it was explained, were to beat back the crowds on ceremonial days.

I was taken into the temple to view the huge statue of Chamba or Maitreya, the coming Buddha, who is to reincarnate as a European, it is said. It was heavily encrusted with lapis, jade, coral, and turquoise, and the walls of the chapel were painted with elaborate frescoes, the workmanship very beautiful. In a side chapel was the throne of the famous oracle who had been dethroned for being too human and eloping with the sister of the Tibetan Trade Agent. She soon left him and he lives in retirement, but one is shown his crown of skulls and his scepter and brocade robes. The Tibetans still believe his utterances as implicitly as

FRIENDLY—UNFRIENDLY SCENERY

those of the temple of Apollo at Delphi and Jupiter at Dodona were believed.

The learned abbot, head of the monastery, was absent and his yellow robe was coiled in a heap on his mat to look as if he were sitting there in meditation surrounded by the implements of his religious service. More tea was served to me here, and the Lamas laughed heartily when I made pretense of stealing the beautiful silver and jade tea cup. They had a delightful sense of humor, and although we understood not a word that we exchanged, we enjoyed each other immensely. When they took me through the kitchen I exclaimed at the enormous churns for butter-tea, and the jugs for chang, and had Tharchin tell them that I thought they lived too well. At that they laughed again. But genuine terror was shown by a small disciple when I said that I would take him along with me for a meal. He was only pacified when I decided that he was too thin.

The Lamas escorted me to the gate when I left, and the acting head said they would like me to come and be a nun there and run the kitchen for them, and said they would build me a convent if I would do so. This again caused merriment.

Below the monastery spread the wide meadow of Lingmatan where the grass was as fine as any I have seen on the tee of a golf course though grazed over by herds of sheep and yak. The black tents

SPOKEN IN TIBET

of herdsmen dotted its surface, and high above rose the snow peak of the Jelep-Là.

A rock path led down from the monastery, then up by a series of waterfalls along the Amo Chu. One immense rock had a dwarf rhododendron spread across it, the white blossoms spraying over the sides as if to catch a glimpse of their beauty in the water. A bit farther along staves had been driven into the mountain side with bamboo planks laid across them, and we crossed on this railless gallery high above the ravine and the river. Then a desolate bit, the path crossing and recrossing the river which eddied into clear green pools and foamed over boulders.

Gautsa, Meadow of Joy, and our halting place for the night, lay at the end of this journey of delight. There was no meadow, but joy enough as I perched high among the boulders above the dak bungalow, with a waterfall dashing off the high rocks by my side, where I could reach out and pick the tall blue poppies, rarest of Himalayan flowers, with stems two and three feet long. It was cool and peaceful, and recalled to memory the credo written by a Chinese about 200 B.C.:

“I believe in the deep blue sky and the smiling water. I believe in the living friendships given by the flowers and the trees. Little paths through the green woods I love, and the sound of leaves on the ground, or of a nut falling, or even of a broken twig.”

FRIENDLY—UNFRIENDLY SCENERY

And just above Gautsa the tree line ends, at about 12,000 feet. A profusion of lavender dwarf rhododendrons escorted us to the very end of the Chumbi Valley. The road was slippery at first, and the ponies stumbled so often that riding was impossible. Beyond the tree line was a steep rock embankment, and unfriendly scenery, and a fierce, cold wind penetrated between my shoulder blades. There is often a difference of eighty degrees in temperature between midday and night.

At the end of the verdant Chumbi Valley one realizes that one has entered the bleak land of Tibet, where the average annual rainfall is only twelve to fourteen inches, while in Sikkim it is two hundred inches. There is no tree or blade of grass, only the wide spreading plain of Phari, grazed over by yak herds, and broken by wide snow ranges. The acrid smell of yak dung stung one's membranes, and there, far in the distance, but seemingly near in the clear atmosphere, was Phari Jong, or fort, at fourteen thousand three hundred feet, the highest town in the world, with a post office, and also holding undisputed claim to being the filthiest town in the universe.

Snow began to fall. The herdsmen were all sheltered behind their black octagonal tents. These were built atop walls of sod that the fierce winds and drifting snow might not penetrate. Every little distance along the route one saw pebbles piled

SPOKEN IN TIBET

on some rock, these the offerings to the spirits, made by travelers.

As we entered the Phari plain, a string of ragged beggars came towards us, with matted hair, hands upheld for baksheesh and voices whining. They spread out across our line of march and Tharchin said:

“It’s a trick they have. They will try to come close, and if they succeed will sometimes grasp one’s reins. If they be hold-up men they will then knife and steal.”

We learned that a day or so before a runner coming down Gyantse with money had been killed this way. But I think it likely that he had not taken precaution to keep secret the fact that he had a large sum with him, and that he had no one along for protection. In such a vast wilderness it is not to be wondered that an occasional raid occurs. The victims are usually men traveling alone. I can think of no distant journey a woman could take through wild country where the hazards are so few as along these Trade Routes that have come under the supervision of the British authorities. All that we had to do as this horde of beggars flocked towards us was to urge our horses to a faster gait, and they broke their line to let us pass.

Dominating the plains, rising to 23,930 feet, was “The Mountain of the Goddess Lady,” Chumolhari, a beautiful snow-covered peak rising out of a



HOUSES PLASTERED WITH DUNG CAKES IN PHARI



PHARI, THE HIGHEST TOWN IN THE WORLD, IS LITERALLY SUNK IN ITS OWN FILTH

FRIENDLY—UNFRIENDLY SCENERY

vast snow range. The only peak in Europe that gives somewhat the same effect is the Matterhorn, though the latter is only 14,776 feet high . . . only a few feet higher than the plain I was then traversing.

There is no wheeled traffic in Tibet. High dignitaries may go in palanquins, but ordinary mortals must travel by pony or yak unless on foot. Yet from the plains of Phari all the way to Lhasa, with very few easily overcome obstacles, the road is suitable for motors. Some years ago, in fact, the British did send the parts of a motor in and assembled them, hoping to shorten the now tedious journey for the officials. But the Dalai Lama prohibited its use, largely, perhaps, because it would deprive the mulemen of what they now make in transporting men and supplies. The Dalai Lama himself, however, had a yellow and red motor made for his own use, and, as I journeyed in, it was coming piecemeal across the passes and plains to be assembled in Lhasa by Chinese. Wherever the coolies halted with their precious burdens festival was made, incense was burned, and worship offered to the possessions of the King-Priest. These celebrations were given likewise for the dogs that an American gentleman sent in for His Holiness. They also were being taken in as I journeyed to Gyantse.

CHAPTER XII

THE FILTHIEST TOWN IN THE WORLD . . . PHARI

PHARI JONG has the appearance of great strength as it rises out of the plains, but the British found it seamed with cracks and utterly worthless for defense purposes when they occupied it in 1904. No one seems able to tell its age: but Bogle, who passed through Phari on his mission for Warren Hastings in 1774, found it already ancient.

The town of Phari is very literally sunk in its own filth. The refuse of centuries, yaks' horns, carcasses, excrement, have piled so high beside the houses, where they were thrown, that today one descends into the houses by steps cut in hardened ordure.

The houses themselves are of sod cut from the plain; the underground rooms are dark and filthy, and the air, filled with argol smoke from yak-dung fires and the stench of long-unwashed humanity, was stifling. "Dirt, grease, dirt, grease and smoke," recorded Thomas Manning of Phari when he passed through in 1811.

Phari has never known even the dream of a garden or a flower. It can surely never have known

FILTHIEST TOWN IN THE WORLD

one golden hour, one fine emotion, one exquisite thing. There, laughter is gross on loose-hanging lips; smiles are vacant reflex motions. Beauty, Virtue, Phari . . . an impossible Trinity. Yet above all this degradation watches one of the purest of visions, the eternal snows of Chumolhari.

Years ago fitting tribute was paid to its beauty by travelers, who no longer stop for the gracious ceremony. Bogle recounts: "The servants gathering together a parcel of dried cow-dung, one of them struck fire with his tinder-box and lighted it. When the fire was kindled Paima took out a book of prayers; one brought a copper cup, another filled it with a kind of fermented liquor out of a new-killed sheep's paunch, mixing in some rice and flour, and after throwing some dried herbs and flour into the flame they began their rites. Paima acted as chaplain. He chanted the prayers in a loud voice, the others accompanying him, and every now and then the little cup was emptied towards the rock. About eight or ten of these libations being poured forth, the ceremony was finished by placing upon the heap of stones a little ensign."

I should have loved to take part in such tribute, but always "When I see Beauty I shall pause, and there, by deep appreciation, offer prayer."

Old with the age of decay and not with that of mellowed wine is Phari. Putrefaction is on every side. Maggot-covered cattle feebly nose in dung

SPOKEN IN TIBET

heaps; what they find is disputed by heartbroken dogs. Age-old sores are displayed by leprous children and by adults, one out of every three of whom, in a population of about two thousand people, is affected with venereal disease.

Down a narrow channel in the streets flows a stinking trickle of brackish water choked with refuse. Half-decayed corpses of dogs lie almost across the doorsteps. Houses are plastered over with dung cakes. Phari has become nothing through living. It belongs to the day-before-yesterday.

I wanted to push on, to leave the stench of Phari at once, to put quickly behind me the memory of the filthy dak bungalow wherein one traveler, speaking for all others, had recorded in the visitors' book this pungent comment: "The chowkidar smells like a pole cat."

And yet I stayed. That something in me that wants to absorb an experience held me there for three days; the same feeling that kept the handkerchief from my nose while passing through the camel tunnel under the mountain in Aden, or in the narrow streets of Canton China, where decaying fish offended one's olfactory nerves. Thus Phari and its "hommes aromatisés" became a milestone in Living.

A violent wind drove against the rattling windows and through numerous cracks of the rest

FILTHIEST TOWN IN THE WORLD

house. Dung fires were inadequate even to take the chill off the dreary rooms . . . and yet I stayed. I choked in the dust of the plains, and rode a yak. I visited the Jongpen, or Fort Commander, and presented my first ceremonial scarf, throwing it across his outstretched hands as custom demanded. My gifts were carried on a platter by one of my servants and presented to one of his. I drank butter-tea with him and his altogether delightful wife, and invited them to have tea with me next day.

That was a party! I had also as my guests the Indian Postmaster and the leading merchant of Phari. I gave them tea, European style, and biscuits and jam, and wore my best bedroom slippers of red leather lined with fur, and crammed my guests with all the worldly information I was possessed of, then some weeks old. I found them to be keen men, and friendly. There is something about the Tibetan at his worst or at his best that one likes. All that I saw and heard of them later made me realize that they are a race with great possibilities.

CHAPTER XIII

“THERE ARE NO REWARDS OR PUNISHMENTS . . .
ONLY CONSEQUENCES”

I LEFT Phari in a heavy snowstorm, my mulemen the sorriest looking bunch of cut-throats imaginable. For at Phari I had to let Tsigyalbu and Lhatuk go to avoid a fight over local transportation, and when I saw the men who would naturally have been the ones to provoke it I understood the wisdom of the B.T.A.'s decision.

It was swift going over the plains on horseback, then a gradual ascent to the Tang-Là, fifteen thousand three hundred feet. Snow birds were the only signs of life. Time and again we had to halt to dig clods of ice out of the horses' hoofs, and Namgayé, the strong coolie, fell behind. When we came to the Tuna plains he refused to start off ahead of the bandobast in the early morning, saying that he was afraid. Even when I told him that we would follow shortly and showed him that I was armed, he was afraid.

“The Bhutanese come down over the mountains here and raid the pack trains,” he insisted. “Two men were murdered here a few days ago.” I had



MY NEW MULEMEN LOOKED LIKE CUTTHROATS



THEY HAVE NEVER EVEN DREAMED OF A GARDEN OR A FLOWER

“NO REWARDS OR PUNISHMENTS”

Tharchin inquire if this was a fact when we got to the next stage, but all that we could get out of the chowkidar was: “So it is said.”

Lacking a newspaper, one takes rumor. I acted as if it were true and kept my men together. The Bhutanese are the local bad men, outlaws whose raids into India have time and again forced the English troops to take up arms. They come down to these plains, I fancy, very much as did the young bloods in the Middle Ages sport in midnight raids to collect purses from travelers. One such lived to become Chief Justice of England.¹

At ten o'clock each day the wind comes up with fury across the steppes. It drives off the snow mountains and hurls itself for thirty miles across unbroken plain. Woolen clothes were useless for warmth. I was frozen to the marrow until I put on the slicker which I kept rolled in front of my saddle. Along this stretch I wore a silk face mask that saved my skin from being literally torn off. But the tears froze on my cheeks and I was blinded by the fury of the wind. My men had their heads wound in woolen scarves that left only their eyes visible, and Tharchin wore a long Tibetan robe lined with fur. If, as Amiel has said: “A landscape is a state of soul,” this one bred in me such pessimism that I felt that deep distrust born of Kipling's text: “Even little babies' hearts are as bad as

¹ Sir John Popham.

SPOKEN IN TIBET

they make them.” Certainly a “bad day” has different meanings with every change of latitude and longitude.

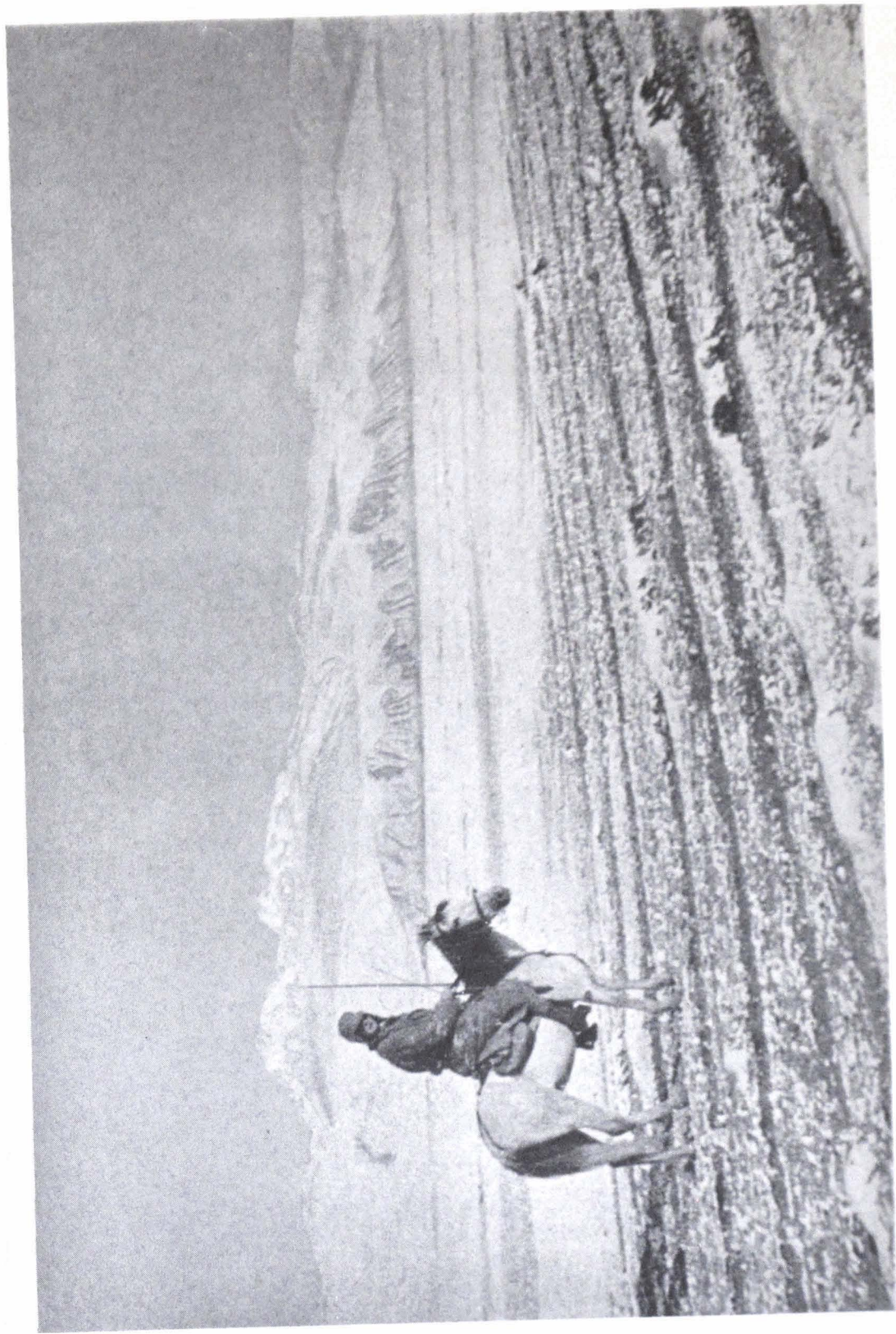
With the atmospheric pressure about 8.30, going afoot was laborious and the coolie was never at hand when I needed my camera so I gave it to one of the pony boys to carry and secured a pony for him to ride.

What a country! Not even abandoned, just never peopled. Endless plain. Endless snow. Endless void. It seemed to say: “And so it was, and is, and ever shall be, forever and ever, Amen.”

I lost all sense of belonging to the twentieth century. The present was a mere vanishing point . . . more a part of the past as my world viewed it; for Tibet, on its road down the years, lingers in the Middle Ages, with customs and modes of thought, and laws, long outgrown in the Western hemisphere. “Stages of development,” the Lama had said . . . Life a series of opportunities. It was easy to believe up there that the soul was eternal and not merely immortal.

Time was an illusion. Even the light that struck my eyes had started on its journey across space long before the dawn of history. All was flux and I a part of it. I seemed, indeed, to be just coming into being with the liberation of values that had been submerged in my city-thinking.

A grand carelessness about the future came over



CROSSING THE TUNA PLAIN, 14,700 FT., WOOLEN CLOTHES DID NOT KEEP ME WARM

“NO REWARDS OR PUNISHMENTS”

me. Civilization had lost its hold. Back in my city-past I had groped blindly, valuing too highly things that were not even in the world of my today. “Where the pack-train plods in the desert noon, and the world runs out to space,” life is a more splendid thing. Again I felt the sense of a pervading Presence, and the will to let It, God, run the universe unhampered by the monkey-wrench of petition that seeks to set aside the workings of well-ordered law for special interest.

I was crossing the wide Tuna plain all seamed with frozen ruts, cut, through centuries, by countless hoofs, and dotted with the holes of tailless rats that made the age-old advice “festina lente” altogether unnecessary. The imminent danger of a pony’s stepping into one of these crevices made a faster gait than walking impossible. We marched on and on and on, hour after hour, across the vast table-land, at an altitude of over fifteen thousand feet, the horizon on every side a chain of towering snow peaks, Chumolhari rising in supreme beauty above them all.

I had slumped in my saddle, worn with the long march, and looking down the vision of years that focused at last on that midnight vigil in the depths of the jungle . . . the Lama at prayer, and his spoken words: “There is no sin . . . only stages of development.”

Suddenly my horse shied violently and nearly

SPOKEN IN TIBET

unseated me. When I had regained my poise and given him a reassuring pat, I noticed that a strange horseman had joined my caravan, a Lama, hooded, his face wrapped as was my own and that of my men, in a wool scarf. I saluted him, but received no answer. He merely rode silently beside me, focusing my attention. Then, just as I was about to call to Tharchin who rode some paces behind me, from the depths of the woolen scarf came the words:

“There are no rewards or punishments . . . only consequences.”

That also I seemed to have read somewhere. It struck on my ear like the familiar notes of an instrument only half appreciated in the volume of an orchestra, but coming with the special message of a solo in that vast silence.

Again the words were in English, and over the roar of wind I spoke to the Lama. But instead of answering, he lifted his reins high and taut, and his pony shot forward at a gait that I tried to emulate. But my horse stumbled and almost fell, and I was forced to halt him and see the Lama vanish as if the plain had swallowed him.

Had I actually witnessed one of the phenomena described so accurately by L. Adams Beck? She had written me that she could vouch for the truth of every word in her wonderful stories of the occult. I turned to question Tharchin, but it was evident

“NO REWARDS OR PUNISHMENTS”

that he had seen nothing, for he merely cautioned against so fast a gait that might break the pony's leg if he stepped into a hole.

The loneliness of the vast plain gripped me . . . the misery of the East enveloped me, yet I had had answered another of the riddles of the universe. The Wise Men came out of the East.

CHAPTER XIV

FOR DAYS AT 14,700 OR 15,300 FEET ABOVE
SEA LEVEL

MINNEHAHA was not waiting for us at Shobra Shubra or Whispering Waters, but I had fully expected to find her there when we stopped to rest in a lonely serai where my men had tea. Out on the far range a kyang, or wild ass, was grazing, but he kept a distance that made him plainly visible only through the binoculars. He was the only sign of life encountered for hours.

There are, of course, no guide books to this region: and sometimes, after hours of constant moving through desolation, I wondered whether we might not be going in the wrong direction. At least the stage halts were unmistakable, for there is nothing living between any two of them except passing herds; and the ragged Tibetan or the shamefaced dog that greeted us on the outskirts of a village were equal to a sign post: "This Way to the Dak Bungalow."

Villages were rarely more than a cluster of sod or stone huts, few in number. Industry of any kind seemed to be confined to weaving and making indi-

FOR DAYS AT 14,700 OR 15,300 FEET

vidual garments, or handling such scanty transportation as might be required from stage to stage. It is untold wealth to the muleman to get that one rupee, or thirty-seven cents per day per pack animal, and worth a little bloodshed to keep travelers from taking their mules all the way through.

The service grew worse and worse. It was impossible to procure ponies in time to start at dawn, although they were called for immediately upon my arrival. They would come straggling in at all hours, and the men refused to touch my loads until every last bundle was ready. My own men delayed matters also, for the new coolie, Namgayee, loafed on the job from the start, and could not be got out of his blankets without an enlarged vocabulary. I resembled Kipling's character Delilah Aberyswith "with a badly bitted tongue" before I had been many days on the road from Phari. But I excused my bad humor by recalling a saying of Saint Francis de Sales: "God hates the peace of those He has destined for war."

When at last every piece of equipment was stacked, the owner of a transport animal would hand to the village headman a bit of string, or a stone, or a piece of rag, as token, and these would be laid on the various piles; the mule belonging to the owner of a given token would then load his animal regardless of its fitness to carry the load.

And such loading! Boxes so insecurely fas-

SPOKEN IN TIBET

tened on that they were time and again thrown off, and so carelessly handled that they were dropped. The meat safe was put on upside down; lanterns were tied on where they leaked oil into the boxes; and when, in despair of ever getting my collie started early enough to have him at the next stage by my arrival, I hired a local coolie, I was given the old man of the village and found him asleep a mile farther along when I caught up. I had each day to wait until the last mule was loaded and started to make sure that they did not loaf by the dak bungalow for hours.

For several days we were never below fifteen thousand three hundred or fourteen thousand seven hundred feet, always surrounded by vast snow ranges. I tried walking to keep warm, but at that altitude I felt such lassitude that I was forced to mount, and even the exertion of getting up into the saddle was very great.

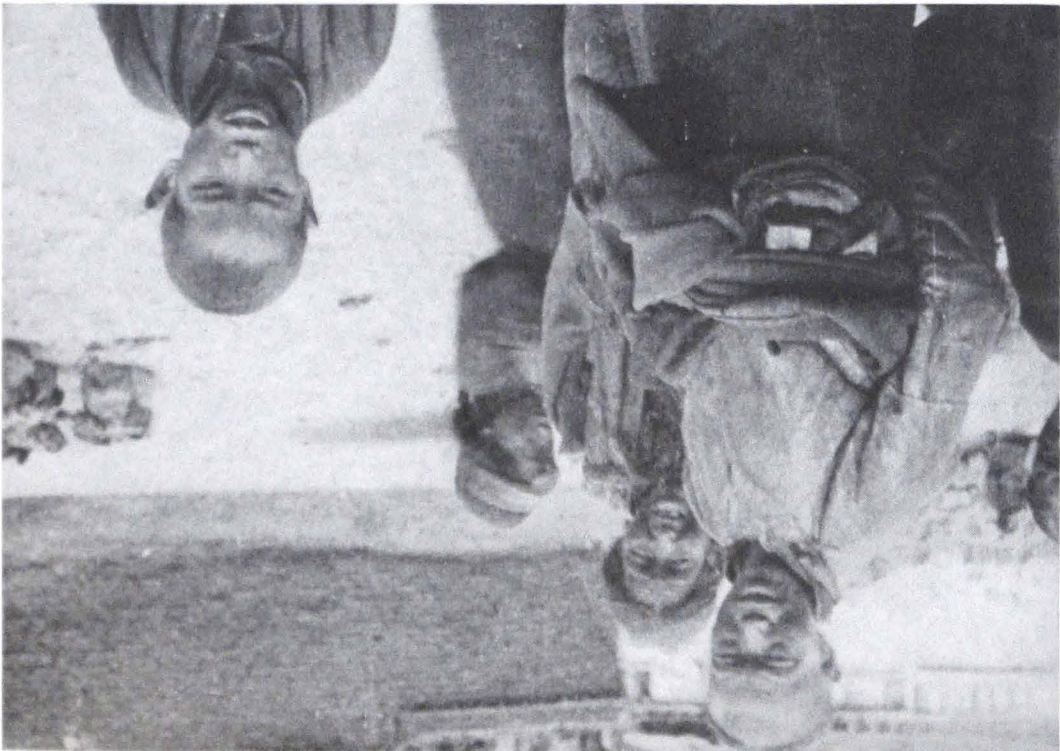
My caravan, led by men with shambling gait and fierce dark faces under matted hair, was not even in sight for most of the march, and came in often long after I had gone to sleep on the braided frame of the charpoy while waiting for my bedding roll.

When it snowed or rained the mulemen stripped the canvas covers from off my loads and wrapped them about themselves, and smiled vacantly when I objected. At one village a woman acted as "headman" to register and start the local transport. She

THEY WOULD EACH HAND A TOKEN TO THE HEAD-MAN TO
GAMBLE FOR THE LOADS



THEY CAN SURELY NEVER HAVE KNOWN ONE EXQUISITE THING



FOR DAYS AT 14,700 OR 15,300 FEET

was quicker and more efficient than the men and explained that every one in the village took turns holding the office.

By this time my toilet had become a mere shorthand gesture. Was it *I* that had complained that Tibetans never washed? I at least had water . . . with ice in it, but used it sparingly. A tub in the wash room, with wind howling through every crack, gave me a chill and sore throat. A basin before a feeble fire of yak-dung was substituted thereafter. And why dig down into yakdans for fresh shirt-waists so often? Every exertion was trying at that altitude, and I began to reason to myself that no one would see me. Spots on my coat? Oh, let them wait until I get to Gyantse! It reminded me of a verse that I appreciated in my schooldays which describes the "Town of No-Good":

"It lies in the valley of What's-the-use,
In the province of Let-her-slide;
That tired feeling is native there;
It's the home of the reckless I-don't-care,
Where the Give-it-ups abide."

We moved across the plains like snow-figures in the frequent snowstorms. Leaden skies. Mists chasing among far-off snow ranges . . . and how supremely beautiful when they mirrored in Lake Hram at Dochen, still at fourteen thousand seven hundred feet. The fields about were sown with

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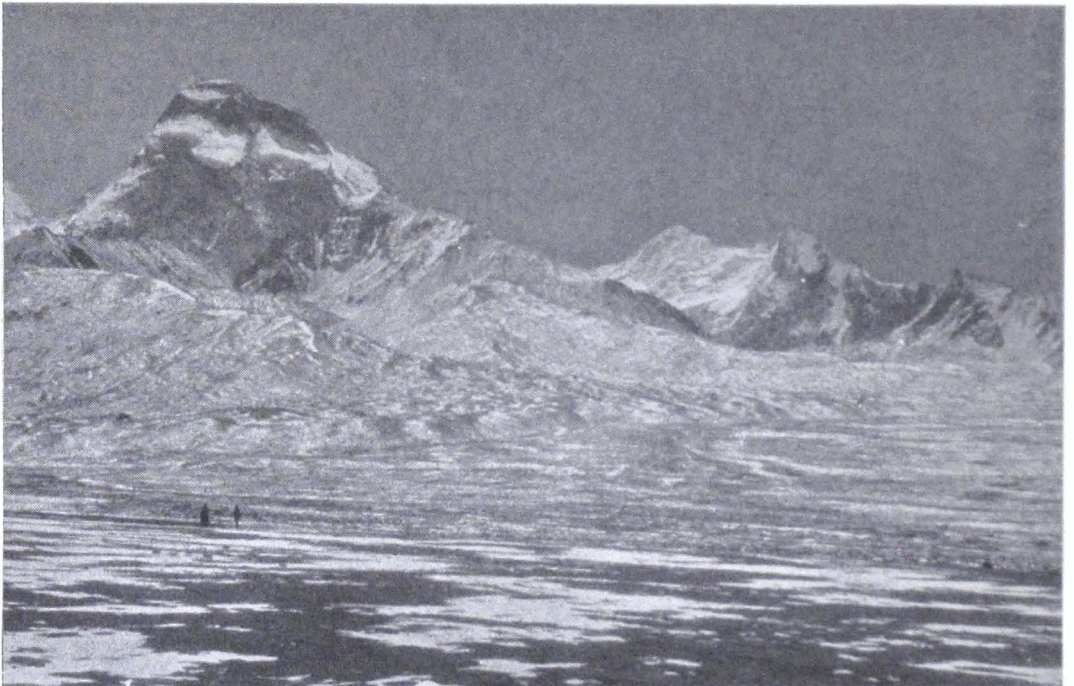
grain that could never ripen at such altitude but would be gathered in September as grass for the cattle. Not a tree or shrub in sight; only a few huge red-beaked crows, magpies, and some waddling Brahminy ducks that one might not kill because they are said to be reincarnate lamas. It is interesting to note that in England there is an old law, which has never been revoked, that makes the killing of a swan a crime punishable by death.

At Saugong we dropped to thirteen thousand four hundred feet, and there we found many strange-looking walls of earth and stone that resembled mané, or prayer walls, such as are seen all over Tibet. But these had no votive offerings piled upon them but what seemed to be bird-houses built on top, little openings where birds might live. This proved to be the explanation; they were really bird-walls, dating from the First Age of Tibet when every one was so prosperous, it is said, that there were no poor to whom alms could be given, so they were bestowed on the birds in this fashion.

Just beyond Saugong was the Red Idol Gorge, a bandit stronghold in days of old, and the site of severe fighting when the Younghusband Mission passed through in 1904. One enters it between high cliffs of terraced rocks all split into squares, that legend has declared to be the petrified boxes of the great trader Norzanbo, who went to Bombay in search of more treasure and never returned.



“WHERE THE PACK-TRAIN PLODS IN THE DESERT NOON AND THE WORLD RUNS OUT TO SPACE,” LIFE IS A MORE SPLENDID THING



THE ETERNAL SNOWS OF CHUMOLHARI, 23,930 FT., AS I SAW THEM FROM AN ALTITUDE OF 15,300 FT.

FOR DAYS AT 14,700 OR 15,300 FEET

I had traversed the deepest gorge in the world on the road to Leh, and may be forgiven for regarding this one as no gorge at all. Moreover the idol, Tara, or Drolma, is blue and not red. But so is the Red Sea, green . . . and so are green blackberries, red.

All through the gorge one finds boulders strewn with pebbles, the offerings of herdsmen; and rocks were painted with the mantra of Tibet, "Om mané padmé hum"—O God the Jewel in the Lotus. The meaning of these words I described at such length in "In the World's Attic" that I refrain from repetition.

The River of Joy, the Nyang, ran through the gorge on its way to Gyantse, and beyond, the ruins of a feudal castle topped a high cliff. I was so far from civilization that it was easy to imagine the plains peopled with men in heavy plates of armor held together with knotted thongs, and with helmets of lacquered leather surmounted with crests of horsehair; their horses, too, covered with leather; the riders bearing small round shields to ward off the heavy archery. I could imagine the air rent with screams of rage as the terrible struggles of the steppes went on, and mountains echoed to the fierce Tibetan war-whoop: "Ki-hu-hu-u-u!"

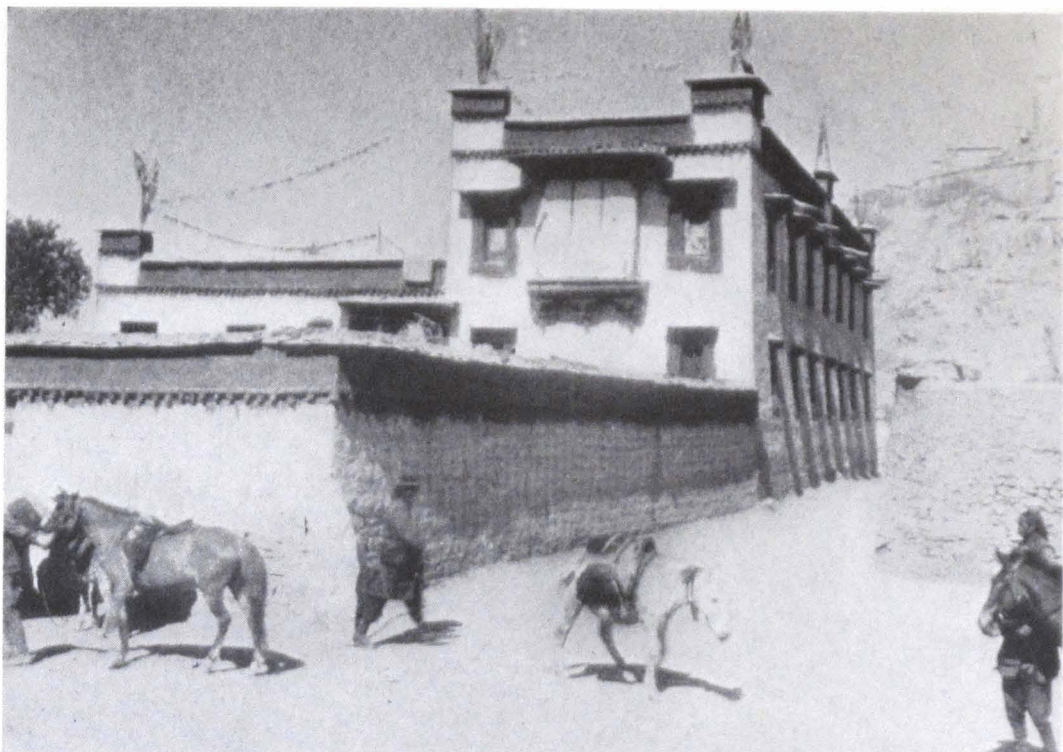
CHAPTER XV

THE THIRD LARGEST TOWN IN TIBET . . . GYANTSE

THERE were acres of dwarf iris and bags of willows in the fields before Gyantse; and rising five hundred feet behind the town was Gyantse Jong. The fort was considered to be impregnable, but was easily captured by the British in 1904, though defended by seven thousand Tibetans, with obsolete arms.

The ground was strewn with tiny pebbles that made going difficult; and what had seemed a nearby town in the clear atmosphere actually took a long time to reach.

Gyantse is two hundred and thirteen miles from Siliguri in India, and about one hundred and fifty from the borders of Tibet and one hundred and forty from Lhasa. It lies at 13,120 feet, in latitude 89 and 90, and longitude 28 and 29 degrees. My bandobast had quite an air as we approached, for the chief muleteer was gayly costumed in a garment of maroon, worn with one sleeve hanging loose as is the custom in Tibet, and a wide scarf of pale blue wool woven in red patterns slung across his shoulders and hanging down to his waist in the



THE HOME OF A TIBETAN NOBLE IN GYANTSE



DOORWAYS WERE MARKED WITH MYSTIC SIGNS

THIRD LARGEST TOWN IN TIBET

back. High red-embroidered boots of felt, and enormous loops of silver set with turquoise in his ears completed a harmony that he, himself, was fully aware of.

The dak bungalow in Gyantse stands in a walled garden beside the Changlo mansion that served as headquarters for the British Mission in 1904. From its roof one can see the whole range of hills, but even then, in July, it was chilly indoors and fires of twigs or yak dung hardly lasted long enough for comfort.

Wandering through the streets of Gyantse was a different experience from my visit to Leh in Ladakh, on the far western side of the Himalaya. In Gyantse it was impossible to take a step without being surrounded by beggars clamoring for bak-sheesh, but apart from that there was a total lack of the seething activity noticeable in every town down in India. There was not even the contagious and beautiful languor of the East; life there seemed to be endurable merely because it was transitory. There are no shops at all in Gyantse, and, except for weaving and paper-making, nothing at all is produced there; but from ten to one o'clock each morning vendors come to the town square and sit under large umbrellas or strips of canvas, and sell such commodities as dried cheese, little cakes, strings of beads or strips of cloth from India or China. There is not one thing to be found that a

SPOKEN IN TIBET

collector would desire. The only antiques were seated by the roadside twirling prayer wheels.

The town of about five thousand inhabitants is unpaved, undrained, and without sanitation of any kind. Notwithstanding this, by comparison with Phari, it is well kept. The houses of the well-to-do are imposing and of pleasing architecture. They are built around a courtyard, three sides of which are occupied by storehouses and stables; the mansion itself faces the gate and is often several stories high, its flat roof decorated under the eaves with a band of red outlined with black. The window frames are broader at the bottom and ornamented at the top, and there is always a balcony over which flounces and curtains are draped.

Everywhere one sees rams' horns and skulls hanging over doorways. Prayer wheels are set in the walls, and prayer flags flutter from every roof, charms, these, against the Evil Eye which science now tells us has a definite basis in fact, as the radiations of the human eye are strong enough to kill yeast cells. Tibetans, like primitive people everywhere, live in fear of demons that must be propitiated. But even in the Christian era westerners suffered from a like complex. Pope Gregory the Great once said that a nun ate a devil that was sitting on a piece of lettuce and he exorcised it, and the devil complained that the nun had eaten him because she forgot to make the sign of the cross.



MY MULEMAN WORE TURQUOISE EARRINGS



NO PRISONS ARE MAINTAINED IN TIBET. CRIMINALS ARE SHACKLED AND TURNED LOOSE TO BEG LIKE THIS MURDERER WHO GREETED ME DAILY IN GYANTSE

THIRD LARGEST TOWN IN TIBET

Those were the days when the devil was coaxed, or smudged with sulphur, or berated by calling him names hour after hour, or was beaten out of the wretched possessed ones. In the Catholic Church to this day every priest on ordination receives the power of exorcism.

On my visits to town I was greeted by a man whose feet were shackled with a broad iron bar attached to rings about his ankles. He explained quite simply that he would have to wear it for life as he had killed a man in a quarrel. Prisons are not maintained in Tibet; criminals are flogged or mutilated and then turned out shackled to pick up a living as best they may.

When a man or woman is to be flogged they are pegged, face-downwards, on the ground with legs apart and lashed alternately on the inner thighs by two men armed with rawhide thongs. Two strokes count as one, and a clerk keeps count of the number which runs to two or three hundred.

** Two lines deleted by order of the Government of India.*

Though capital punishment has long since been abolished in Tibet nothing is done about it if a person dies as a consequence of the severity of his punishment.

When officials are degraded their houses may be sealed and their entire families turned out into the street to beg. The Dalai Lama, as supreme over-

SPOKEN IN TIBET

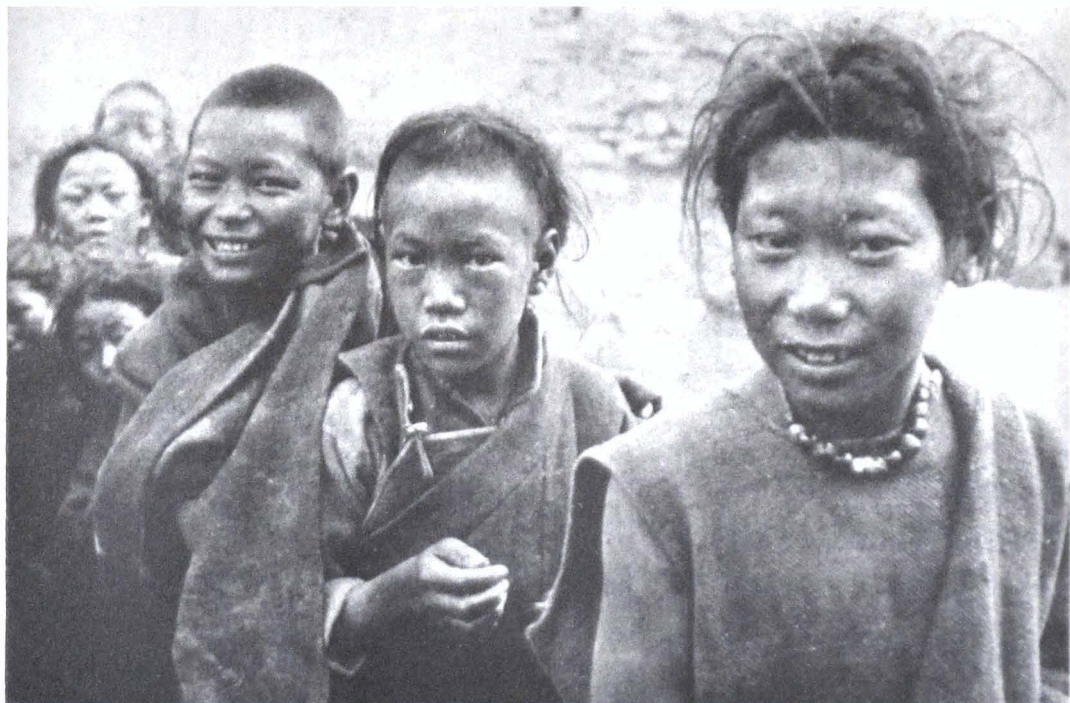
lord, has power over life and death and may even prevent the transmigration of souls.

** Paragraph deleted by order of the Government of India.*

Only a few years ago, on certain festival days, a rope was run from the top of the Potala, the palace of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, to the Column of Record in the square below. A man was fastened to it and shoved down while the crowds enjoyed seeing him cut open and on fire from the friction. Now he is sent down on a saddle, but I could not learn what might be his fate from the impact at the bottom. One province in Tibet has its taxes remitted for furnishing the victim for this occasion, which is a poor guarantee that the crowd is robbed of much of its blood-thirsty pleasure. "We Tibetans are hard-hearted," I was told by a high official.

It requires an effort of the imagination to picture the days when westerners were equally hard-hearted, and spectators lined the public square to witness no less fiendish amusements. It is difficult to visualize a Christian bride marching past a line of heretics set on fire as nuptial torches, or to realize that autos-da-fé were impressive church ceremonies in the fifteenth century. Stages of development!

Although there is, strictly speaking, no caste system in Tibet such as exists in India, there are



THEY CAME TO COLLECT THE ANNA I PROMISED TO EACH ONE WHO WOULD WASH
HIS FACE



SEEN IN GYANTSE

THIRD LARGEST TOWN IN TIBET

nobles and peasants, and certain functions, such as the butchering of animals, is confided to outcasts who are assumed to be damned, though the beasts they kill are blessed to insure their rebirth into a higher order of living. Tibetans pray for the tiny microbes that they may have swallowed inadvertently with food or drink, that these also may have a happy rebirth. Thus is the Buddhist conscience appeased for taking life.

The commonest method of killing is to make a slit in the beast's abdomen into which the arm is thrust and the heart then squeezed that the blood may be preserved in the flesh, a method which is said to render it more palatable. This procedure goes back to the 10th law of Genghis Khan: "It is forbidden to cut the throats of animals slain for food; they must be bound, the chest opened, and the heart pulled out by the hand of the hunter."

Tibetans, although shunning water, can be coaxed to ablutions I found one day when, passing by a stream, I was pestered for baksheesh. I told Tharchin, who always accompanied me on my rambles, to tell them that each one who would wash his face would be given an anna (equal to two and a half cents U. S. currency). Simultaneously, all within hearing ducked their heads under the water and rubbed them with their hands. Children who tried to escape were grabbed and thrown into the water screaming, babies in arms received such bap-

SPOKEN IN TIBET

tism as they had never dreamed of, and the air was rent with cries of protest and shouts of laughter.

Soon a long line of smiling Tibetans filed past while Tharchin, acting as almoner, doled anna bits into each eager palm. I noticed that when washed the Tibetans are little darker than ourselves, and rosy-cheeked, and joyous as people only can be to whom life is endless toil and hardship relieved by some rare occasion for merrymaking.

Circumambulating sacred objects is a custom practiced everywhere in Tibet. It is a form of penance by which they expect to obtain merit and the remission of sins. It is a usual thing to see men and women prostrate in the dust measuring their length with outstretched arms, then rising and stepping to the marks their fingers made, when they fall prone again.

CHAPTER XVI

A VISIT WITH THE DALAI LAMA'S REPRESENTATIVE

THARCHIN, you don't have to be afraid of him."

As I addressed my interpreter I saw the flicker of a smile pass over the face of the Dalai Lama's representative, the Kenchen, who is said not to understand English. I was beginning to suspect that he learned a good deal by pretending not to. He was an experienced diplomat who had represented the Dalai Lama in Peking. Why should the Dalai Lama keep a Trade Agent in Gyantse who could not understand the English with whom he had to deal?

I was calling, by appointment, on the Kenchen. I had presented the ceremonial scarf, my gifts had been delivered, and I was seated behind one of those delectable little folding Tibetan tables, brilliantly painted, while the Kenchen sat, Buddha-wise, to my left, dressed in a dark robe of brocade. Because I had ridden into town I was in riding habit.

The conversation was being so long drawn out that I began to fear that I would reach the Tibetan's daily quota of from fifty to seventy cups

SPOKEN IN TIBET

of tea if Tharchin could not be induced to talk more rapidly. Every sentence had to pass through the mill of translation, and came out, I am sure, with all of the "chaff" and much of the frankness ground out, for there are established customs in Tibet, and reverence for authority requires a hide-bound humility that tries one's patience.

Tharchin obviously enjoyed his rôle; but with all due respect for a necessary self-deprecation in the presence of a superior he was overdoing it; his breath came in humble gasps; words followed haltingly with long pauses between, and his eyes were rarely lifted higher than his folded hands. And so I protested.

"It is a manner that I assume," he answered me.

"Then please do assume another one or we will be here all day. Please tell the Kenchen that I want to open the school in Gyantse again, and install you as teacher, but that I understand that the Dalai Lama does not wish to have the people educated."

"The people themselves do not wish to learn," the Kenchen answered.

"But, Kusho," I replied, this being the correct way to address a Tibetan gentleman, "I have found out that there are one hundred children in Gyantse whose parents are willing to pay five rupees a month to have them taught."

The subject was adroitly changed and I was

DALAI LAMA'S REPRESENTATIVE

asked about my journey, my age, and if I had children. After satisfying my interlocutor on these points I returned to my quest:

“Kusho, I want also to start a newspaper here for the Tibetans. I can send lots of material for it, so that they can learn about the outside world.”

“The people do not wish to know about the outside world. They wish no contact with foreigners.”

“But I think they do, Kusho. All along the road they seemed interested. They have heard of President Hoover's efforts for world peace, and asked me to tell him please to continue them, for war was a dreadful thing. Also they told me they had heard that America was the richest country in the world, and that England owed her money. When I told them that other nations owed us also, they seemed surprised that there were other western nations.”

Again I was gently led to other subjects, and in answer to his question I told him how interesting I had found the journey, and said I would like to go to Lhasa. To this he answered that it would be a month at least before any answer could be received on account of official red tape, and that my request might even not be answered at all. We had already laughed together about several things, and, recognizing a lively though suppressed sense of humor in the Kenchen, I remarked:

SPOKEN IN TIBET

“Kusho, it occurs to me that you are lucky to be dealing with the English. We would long ago have turned all the Tibetans into office holders, and would have had a Country Club for ourselves in Lhasa and no doubt a revolution on our hands.” His enjoyment of this remark was obvious.

Just what Tharchin made of all this I don't know, but the flicker of a smile on the Kenchen's face made me realize that he got at least the gist of what I was saying. And how I wished that I might converse with him in Tibetan where one word conveys a whole range of thought. If one wishes to speak of distance, “far-near” covers vast areas; weight is indicated by “light-heavy” and one can guess whether it refers to fine crystal or a cannon ball. They say “cold-warm” for temperature . . . and with reason in a land where one can literally get sun-stroke on one side while the other is being frost-bitten, so great is the difference of temperature in sun and shade. And could anything be more graphic than “secret push” for bribery, and “murder sleep” for awaken? I'd like to see a Thibetan will and find out how they “give, devise and bequeath.”

Of course I wanted to go to Lhasa. Who that journeys thus far does not? But even so eminent an explorer as Sven Hedin was refused permission, and the terms of my permit from the Government of India, made any attempt to proceed beyond

DALAI LAMA'S REPRESENTATIVE

Gyantse without an invitation from the Dalai Lama impossible.

** Paragraph deleted by order of the Government of India.*

I was told that, except for the impressive Potala, Lhasa was like Gyantse, and that conversation with the Dalai Lama was limited to a few sentences. But still one wants to go to Lhasa.

CHAPTER XVII

WHAT GYANTSE LACKS MOST PERHAPS IS "TEMPTATION"

FOUR young and attractive bachelor officers are marooned in Gyantse, with not one white woman in sight. I was the only one that went out there that year. It is a lonely spot in which to have to spend two or more years. Perhaps, if asked what they missed most, they would answer, as I have been told Admiral Byrd did when asked a similar question about his polar experience, "Temptation."

They play tennis and polo and do a bit of shooting in nearby hills. A great event is made of the King's birthday, and they endure endless native ceremonies with their attendant miseries, and keep smiling. Of course they do sometimes have to go down over the trail on official business, and also get leave, but the day-by-day life is monotonous in the extreme.

When the Political Officer returns from his required visits to Yatung at the other end of the Trade Route, as he did after my arrival, the dignitaries of Gyantse pay their respects and each one

WHAT GYANTSE LACKS MOST

leaves the customary gift. The Dalai Lama's representative left his usual present of twelve dozen rotten eggs. They had not even been washed off.

"How subtle," I exclaimed: "Rotten eggs are a luxury in China and Tibet, but the Kenchen knows well that they are not so regarded by westerners. The British marched into Lhasa and signed their treaty in the Potala, remember."

Dining at the officers' mess in Gyantse, one might imagine oneself in any English home in India. There is a simple dignity and courtesy about every English official I have met that gains respect in the native communities in which they reside.

One wonders what would happen in these communities if this influence were removed . . . in the Free State of Sikkim, for instance. It has been under British protectorate since 1890, they having exclusive control over its internal and administrative and foreign relations. Bhutan, also a border Free State that has always been a source of trouble, agreed in 1910 to place its foreign relations under the British Government. Nepal, with its borders touching those of the Darjeeling district, and with a constantly increasing population, permitted Great Britain to recruit two hundred thousand Gurkhas to fight under the British flag during the world war and has today regiments of Gurkhas in the Indian army. Problems that would mean war if the British withdrew are now easily solved.

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It was festival time in Gyantse and I was invited to lunch with the Dalai Lama's representative on the balcony of the great monastery and advised to be there at 11 A.M. With punctuality my besetting sin I was there on time.

After watching the Lamas being fed in the courtyard below I had to sit and wait until two o'clock for the Kenchen to arrive. After he came an elaborate lunch was served, with endless cups of chang, and Chinese food out of many little dishes. This I was supposed to eat with chopsticks.

Below us in the courtyard a throne had been erected and the head Lama, dressed in a robe of yellow brocade, and wearing a crown, sat in it and fed the sacred fire of yak dung with chunks of butter and seeds. Between times he sprinkled holy water about, and rang a bell while the priests chanted and played weird tunes on their cymbals and horns. Men in masks with peacock-feather headdresses amused the crowd meanwhile; then Lamas in rich brocades hopped about on one foot, and children in comic masks brought peals of laughter from the multitude that crowded the courtyard and roofs of nearby houses.

The meal ended, I visited the interior of the Gompa where elaborate designs in butter decorated the floors. It was made into high ornaments that stood on every altar, and the designs were artful and intricate. By the dim light of lamps floating in

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better one discerned mammoth figures of Buddha, solemn and impressive as the Colossi of Rameses in the temple of Luxor.

The inspection ended, I endured more cups of chang and more food, and when my watch noted half past three I told Tharchin that we must leave.

“But it would give grave offense to go now,” he said.

“But why? I’ve been here four and a half hours.”

“The servants will now be fed . . . it is the custom.”

I endured until five o’clock, then asked permission to withdraw, solemnly swearing never again to be caught at a Tibetan meal.

CHAPTER XVIII

LUNCHING WITH TIBETAN NOBLES

WHEN invitations came from two of the most prominent nobles in Gyantse, I forgot entirely that I had determined never to partake of another Tibetan meal, and accepted forthwith.

One of the most delightful experiences I have ever had was at Gabshi Kusho's, who in Lhasa is known as Do-ring, and is one of the greatest nobles of Tibet. In spite of being in disfavor with the Dalai Lama, who confiscated his Lhasa estate, he still holds the title of Major General, and is Jongpen, or Commander, of a fort on the borders of Nepal. He has had military training under the British, and lived for six months in Assam, and had also visited the Northwest Frontier, so the world outside of Tibet was not unknown to him.

A very charming gentleman is Gabshi Kusho. One might meet him in the most distinguished social circles of any country and be impressed with his culture. His thin face was not handsome according to western standards, but with all its Oriental guardedness, could never be inexpressive. One felt a responsiveness and a keen intelligence, and

LUNCHING WITH TIBETAN NOBLES

it was irksome to endure the slow and, I fear, not too accurate translation of our conversation.

From Gabshi Kusho's left ear hung a long pointed turquoise with large pearl atop; his fingernails were long, denoting, as in China, one who is a stranger to manual labor; on his right thumb was a jade ring a quarter of an inch in width and an inch thick . . . a relic of the days when bows and arrows were weapons of war. "General" in Tibetan means literally "Lord of the Arrow."

Gabshi Kusho's robe hung long, and was of fine plum-colored brocade embroidered at the neck and on the cuffs. It was somber compared to the vivid green brocade worn by his young son. The latter's pigtail was braided with red cloth and wrapped about his head. His face was keen and his manner frank and gracious. His sister also was present and rarely have I seen a lovelier creature. Teeth even and white; eyes full of light and laughter; cheeks rosy, olive-tinted; and abundant black hair hanging loose. How wasted she seemed set in such a wilderness. Yet she was doubtless pitying me for roaming the world alone.

We lunched under an open skylight that ran up funnel-wise, decorated inside with religious paintings. On two sides of the room were elaborate altars, gleaming with gold, and heavy with red lacquer.

From twelve little bowls each one helped himself

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with chopsticks, and after luncheon Gabshi Kusho's wife, who had taken little part in the conversation after the first greeting, showed me through their spacious house, where beams were hand-painted and frescoes adorned most of the walls.

There were student officers bending over books; around the porches sat rows of little boys writing lessons on long slates; and down in the courtyard dozens of women were spinning with tiny hand wheels. On the roof, carpets of beautiful design and workmanship were in the weaving.

I had brought simple gifts to this prosperous home, and the night before my departure from Gyantse an enormous bundle arrived for me, containing small rugs and yards of wool cloth and table delicacies.

Another day was spent with the family of Raja Terring, rightfully the Raja of Sikkim, had he not been forced to abdicate in favor of his brother because he refused to return and take up the duties of government when his father died. He had been brought up in Tibet, and at the time of my visit was absent. I was met by his young son, dressed in a long robe of blue brocade, who came down into the courtyard to greet me. This is the courtesy shown to a superior guest; one to whom less consideration is to be given is met just inside the door, and an inferior would have to find his host upstairs.

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The Ranee and her daughter wore the impressive headdress of Shigatse and Gyantse, enormous hoops wound with red flannel and strung with pearls and turquoises, rising high above their heads and spreading far beyond their ears. Their necks were strung with big carnelians and charm-boxes of gold set with precious stones. The daughter-in-law had on the Lhasa headdress, a triangle of pearls, and in her ears were huge turquoise earrings that fell to her shoulders.

I was taken to the roof where, in a sun-room, seated on divans around a table, we were served meat balls highly seasoned, sliced egg, peppered meat, and meat hashed with spinach, also shredded mushrooms and slugs, and seaweed, and the lining of a fish's stomach, spaghetti, fried cheese with black sauce, each of these delicacies in a little bowl from which we helped ourselves with chopsticks, not scooping the contents into our mouths, as I have seen the Chinese do in Canton, but quite daintily, so that the little I succeeded in bringing all the distance to my mouth on the end of chopsticks left me hungry. Chang was served throughout the meal, and also butter-tea.

Conversation was easy, for the daughter-in-law, Mary Jigmed, had been to school in Darjeeling and spoke very good English.

I had ridden the seven miles beyond Gyantse across the desert accompanied by all of my servants,

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which made a sufficiently impressive escort. And, realizing the condition a white dress would have been in had I worn it in the saddle, I had on my usual costume, a riding habit.

CHAPTER XIX

THE GUEST OF A LEADING MERCHANT

IT was June first, the holiest day of the year, the fifth day of the fourth Buddhist month, the day of the Lord Buddha's Nirvana. Behind the great monastery, the Palkor Choide, the sacred carpet was displayed, hung from a high wall on a hill that I climbed, the better to view the superb embroidery. Originally the carpet was in five strips, but one of them mysteriously disappeared during the British occupancy of Gyantse in 1904.

There was horse-racing and arrow-shooting on the plains, the contestants mounted on gayly-caparisoned steeds. The road was lined with tents wherein the high-class women sat, watching the crowds pass and seeing nothing of the festivities.

I had been invited to tiffin by one of the leading merchants of Gyantse, who was entertaining the British officers and the Dalai Lama's representative that day.

The officers stopped by the dak bungalow for me, and we walked toward the plain where we were met by our host, who eagerly grasped my hand just

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as I whispered to the B.T.A.: "Must I shake hands with him?"

I was reluctant to do so, for his robes were stiff with ancient drippings of food and drink, and his hair escaped at every twist of his short pigtail. His face shone with grease and his blackened teeth were broken . . . the filthiest man I ever saw . . . and yet so likable. And he played host with undisguised delight.

On the wide plain where the festival was in progress, a large tent was spread. It was lined with flowered cretonne, and a wide flounced fly spread across the front; inside were divans covered with carpets, before which stood low tables. In one corner the four British officers and I sat, and a short distance away the Kenchen, in brown-gold brocade and embroidered leather boots. The usual butter-tea was served, a nauseous concoction of brick-tea, butter, soda, and salt mixed in a churn until it had the consistency of soup. I welcomed the alternative of chang, fermented barley water. This, like the tea, was served in small jade bowls set in long-stemmed silver saucers with silver covers. In serving the attendant bowed low and lifted the cup towards me with his right hand while touching my left elbow with the fingertips of his left hand. Etiquette required that I sip it and give it back to be refilled; a ceremony repeated three times.



A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT IN GYANTSE



CROWDS GATHERED FOR THE GYANTSE FESTIVAL

GUEST OF A LEADING MERCHANT

When tiffin was served later it consisted of the usual small dishes, but in all of them was hair. Butter is kept sometimes for two or three years sewed up in a hide with the hair turned inside. Our host came to our table, and from a platter of chupatties, or pancakes of unleavened bread, he took one, laid it on the palm of his dirty hand, and scooped slugs on to it from one of the dishes; then with a dexterous twist he rolled it about his chopstick and smilingly handed it to the British Trade Agent who sat next to him.

I knew that presently it would be my turn for this favor. Having reached the age of protest, and being a firm believer in that old saying of Mohammed: "Trust in God; yet tie the camel's leg," I hurriedly provided myself with a chupatti of my own choosing. I nibbled it very slowly, while my neighbor risked serious internal injury by consuming three that were presented by our host. No "Wassail Bowl" with apples bobbing in spiced wines was ever offered by a more genial host. He ceremoniously repeated the one English sentence that the officers had taught him. But he rendered it thus: "Three cheering rows!"

To kill time the officers started a game of piquet. Another game was begun at the Kenchen's table, a horse-race game that the officers had presented to our host. When it was in full swing the servants crowded about, without being invited, and very

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amiably and without comment from any one, joined in the game.

Our host, meanwhile, having seen to the comfort of his guests, sat himself down at his own table and devoured his repast. The brain-pan of a sheep was placed before him, and he ripped pieces off with his fingers and surfeited himself, occasionally wiping his hands on his robe. Just such table manners were probably in vogue in many a stately baronial hall in the west long ago.

I called the B.T.A.'s attention to our napkins, in the corner of which the "Made in Ireland" tags still adhered.

"We gave them as presents long ago," he remarked.

"Were they ever white?"

"Oh, yes!"

They had never been washed, and months of usage by different people, and for different purposes, had collected more than grime. The attendant wiped the table with ours as he cleared it off. I had had the same ones served me when I lunched in the monastery with the Dalai Lama's representative.

Talking of the dangers I escaped in this wild and isolated land of Tibet, I might stress the gastronomical ones.

While the meal, or meals . . . for there were three to be lived through, were in progress, the

GUEST OF A LEADING MERCHANT

multitude outside formed a ring in front of the tent, and native dancers, like whirling dervishes, kept up an endless entertainment. The crowds were beaten back by guards armed with lashes, and they accompanied us when we strolled about, the B.T.A. distributing largesse among them.

That night I dreamed that hair was growing in my throat and choking me, and I learned before my departure, next day, that two of the officers had sought relief from the doctor. My appetite for any kind of food had fled. Bovril, Force, tea and crackers were about all that I could face during the whole of the return journey.

I stood beyond the walls of the dak bungalow while streaks of dawn rose above the dark mountains and my mules were being loaded. A Lama passed on horseback carrying a pitcher of holy water on his knee. From its lid sprouted a tuft of peacock feathers, and it was dressed in brocade petticoats. Reliquaries covered with red cloth were slung across his back and he jogged along on a high saddle wrapped in his red robes . . . the last bit of color I was to see before I neared civilization.

CHAPTER XX

MORE AND MORE THRILLS TO THE END

WAS it really more beautiful than any other part of the journey, that final passage down over the Himalaya via the Natu-Là? Or did the brief time left me to enjoy it lend greater significance to all I saw?

I made faster time going down, twice marching for fourteen hours, with halts only to eat by the roadside. Sometimes we were on the road from dawn to dark.

At Yatung I branched off where the trail mounts through a forest, glimpses of the beautiful Chumbi Valley showing below. Gayly-robed officials rode by to greet the arriving Political Officer who was on his way in from Sikkim to inspect. We met at the top of the ridge in the pouring rain, and stopped to chat, and I explained how very handsome was the costume I, too, wore in his honor under my abominable slicker.

From the ridge my path led along a cliff, the road built out with round logs and holes filled in with loose stones. It was slippery going, and treacherous. How the laden ponies made it without breaking their legs was a mystery.

THRILLS TO THE END

The scenery grew more and more beautiful as we mounted to Champitang at thirteen thousand three hundred and fifty feet. Fresh snow covered the mountains and it was bitter cold. From Champitang dreary climbing through bog and over loose stones to the top of the Natu-Là, fourteen thousand three hundred and ninety-four feet, where a wide view was partly obscured by mist. The colder air of the mountains cannot retain the moisture which saturates the hot air of the plains, and condensation takes place.

From the Natu-Là a fine rock causeway led into Sikkim. Incredibly lovely views opened out through rhododendron forests as it wound down for fifteen miles beside a steep precipice. Giant bamboo, lichen-bearded trees, waterfalls flung from high banks; then the red-roofed bungalow at Karpoung, after twenty-one miles, covered, mostly, on foot.

Next day we traversed more forest, and were suddenly confronted with a landslide that had carried the entire roadbed away. The animals had to be taken on a detour, but with Tharchin's aid I slid down over the débris for a hundred feet or more and we made our way up the other side and on to Gangtok. From there, after a day's rest, I motored to Kalimpong.

The rainy season had started and there were washouts and long delays while the roadbed was

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actually rebuilt ahead of us and the motor coaxed along narrow embankments of soft mud. No chance of a detour. It was the one road, or none. And it was hot in the forest. The coppersmith bird hammered at its one metallic note, and the cry of a brain-fever bird mounted in maddening crescendo. Then Kalimpong, a comfortable bed, and jackals crying in the night.

Bunty Odling had a tea party just before I left, and was quite scornful because Mrs. G. and I decided to start at three o'clock to be sure of making the nine P.M. train from Siliguri to Calcutta.

"We want to be on the safe side because it's the rainy season," we both explained.

"But the river never stays impassable for more than an hour in the worst rains," declared optimistic Bunty.

Tea was good, and cakes were plentiful, and the kiddies were even more amusing than usual . . . and we lingered. But at four o'clock Mrs. G. piled into her motor with her bags and a woolly white dog, and I into mine with all my possessions, and we were off to the tune of Bunty's still scornful cries.

Only one train a day leaves Siliguri for Calcutta. It was Thursday, and I had endless things to attend to in Calcutta before leaving on Saturday for Bombay to catch my steamer there. Half way down the mountains it began to drizzle; then it poured as

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it can only pour in the tropics. I wonder that there are not a dozen traditions of the flood.

We came to the river bank. It had been a mere stream when I motored through it on my way to Kalimpong in early April; but a roaring torrent greeted us; and before it we halted and made signs of despair at each other through the loosened flaps of the motor curtains.

The chauffeurs went down to the bank and returned shaking their heads and chattering wildly. Mrs. G. argued with her bearer in Hindustani but I understood not a word. Then she sent her servant over to me with a note which said: "If the river doesn't go down before seven we'll have to climb across the track."

I looked up at the track. It ran, narrow gauge, across a high trestle bridge that spanned the river; it was a spur of the main road that carried just freight up the mountains. I wrote on the back of her note: "Whatever we're going to do at seven we had better do now," and gave it to Mrs. G.'s bearer to deliver.

We waited another half hour; it was then close to seven o'clock and her bearer was sent up the hill to interview the guard at the bridge. He returned all excited to repeat what the guard had said:

"At the risk of the mem-sahib's lives, they will cross. It is difficult even for natives with bare feet, how then English ladies with their high heels could

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they jump across wide open spaces where no railing is?"

Another motor drew up beside us and, more venturesome than we, determined to risk the crossing. It stuck in midstream, the water well up to the level of the car floor. In it two disconsolate women sat until natives were recruited from somewhere to push it the rest of the way.

"Shall we try that?" We made signs to one another, Mrs. G. and I. Finally I suggested:

"Come over into my motor and let's pile the luggage in yours. If we have to spend the night here we might as well be sociable." A nicer arrangement; but there seemed to be no conversation left until we both exclaimed: "I'm famished!"

Ages had passed it seemed. I don't know which one of us remarked: "It's too dark now to risk the crossing; the river bed is stony and the car might overturn; at least the luggage would be soaked."

Then finally in desperation: "Let's try the bridge anyway."

We climbed the mud bank to the track and got the guard to wire to Siliguri to have two other cars meet us on the other side. Men were recruited to carry our hand luggage over on their heads. There was just one piece of oilcloth handy which I had brought to protect a certain bag that held my clothes; I indicated it and handed the oilcloth to one of the coolies.

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It was almost pitch dark and I got out my flashlight only to discover that the battery was dying and it was worthless; but from somewhere a lantern was unearthed. Mrs. G. got across and sent it back for my use. By its glimmer I looked at my wrist watch; it was ten o'clock.

What awful gaps to jump, and that foaming torrent below! On either side of the narrow track were wide open spaces with railings at the outside, but quite beyond our reach. The bridge swayed as I leapt, so did I; but there was not room for two abreast and the lantern-bearer had to go on ahead to light the way. Rain came down in torrents; my waterproof, whilst keeping the rain off my dress, drenched me in perspiration. It was hot, hot that night in late July.

I got across, then Mrs. G. and I made our way down the mud embankment on the far side and were devoured with mosquitoes while we waited for the motors to arrive.

"Do you know all the pleasant things said about these Teesta Valley pests?" I inquired. "They are blue-ribbon malaria distributors . . . the deadliest ever."

"And there isn't an inch of my legs that they have left unpunctured," said Mrs. G.

"Nor a *demi-micron* of mine, as the French would say," I countered. "And will you please note what is arriving. There comes the box of

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fruit Bunty asked me to take down to her brother, all nicely covered with my one piece of oilcloth." By virtue of being the sole box in the collection of luggage it had been given preference.

When the motors arrived Mrs. G. and I got into one and started for Siliguri. Her bearer was left to see that the luggage was stored in the other car to follow.

We had of course missed the train, and the waiting room was crowded with natives smoking cigarettes. I sent telegrams to people in Calcutta who must deliver passport, letter of credit, money, stored luggage, and railroad tickets at my hotel during the one-half day I would have there before I left for Bombay. Then Mrs. G. suggested that we find the dak bungalow in town, and when the luggage arrived we went to the deserted rest house.

"Shall we take a room together?"

"Yes, let's."

There was no water to drink and none to wash with at the bungalow.

"Before we go to bed let's write a letter to Bunty. I've lots to say to her," I exclaimed. By way of being a bread-and-butter letter that joint epistle was a novelty.

We had to wait the whole next day in Siliguri, as there is no motor road from there to Calcutta.

"Did you ever hear it said that there were no rewards or punishments, only consequences?" I asked

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. . . and we fell to arguing. An altogether delightful and humorous companion was Mrs. G.

We thought our troubles ended when we were safely on our way to Calcutta. Indian trains are spacious and we had a four-person compartment all to ourselves. There were two electric fans, and six windows, two doors, and plenty of hooks for clothes. I had with me only one dress that it was possible to travel in, the chiffon that I wore, the jacket of which had shrunk in the rain so that its usefulness was over. I hung the precious remains of that costume with my other clothes on a hook between the two doors, each of which had a window set in the upper half. One of these I had closed. Mrs. G. thought that we would have more air with it open.

The gust that followed when she lowered the glass blew the chiffon up into the electric fan, and though we pulled and tugged after we had turned it off, we could not dislodge the dress until she had the inspiration to reverse the blades. After that I sat down on my bunk to sew up a big hole and some small ones that testified to the struggle. Then we discovered that my stockings had blown out of the window.

“Go without them, many women do out here,” was her suggestion when she managed to stop laughing.

“All very well with white or colored clothes,” I

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said disconsolately. "But how will I look with bare legs and a black dress?" We decided that as anything "went" in India I might do my shopping in fancy evening hose, and I slept on them to be sure that they would be with me in the morning.

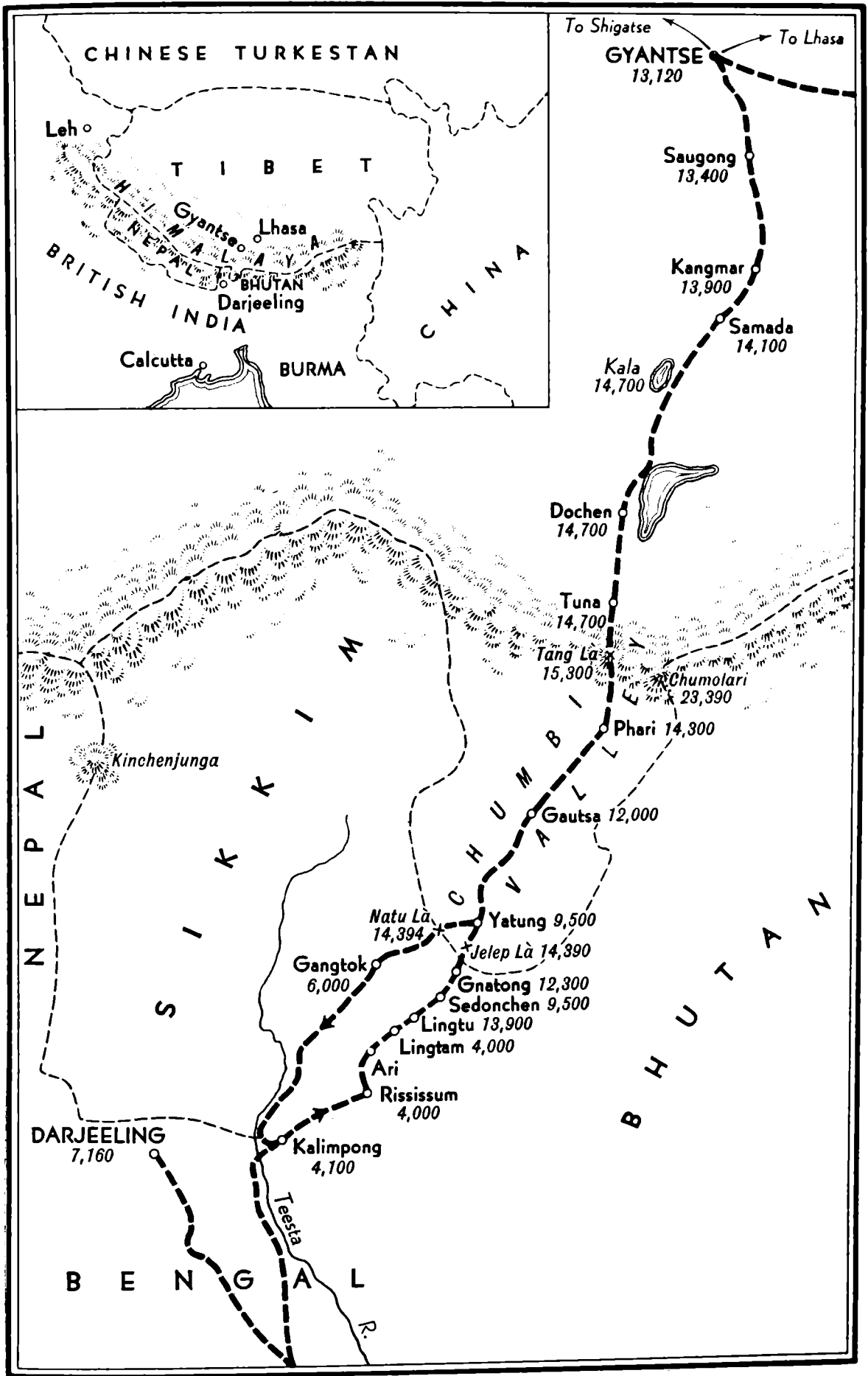
A hundred pounds of ice placed on the floor of my compartment in the train to Bombay made it possible to cross India during the terrible heat of midsummer. I was certainly getting the contrasts that I liked. But gone was the aloneness, the creeping mists, and I welcomed the graciousness of civilization. The gondola on a canal in Venice was better transportation than the back of a yak in Tibet. But there I had traveled far in the understanding of many things:

"There is no sin . . . only stages of development."

"There are no rewards or punishments . . . only consequences."

I coupled these with an old Tibetan proverb which says:

"The goal will not be reached if the right distance be not traveled."



GLOSSARY OF WORDS

Bagh	Walled-in garden.
Bandobast, pronounced bundobust	Arrangement.
Bearer	Personal servant.
Charpoy	Native bed.
Chorten	Receptacle for ashes of the dead.
Chota-Hazri	Little breakfast.
Chowkidar	Caretaker.
Chupatties	Pancakes of unleavened bread.
Dak	Stage.
Gompa	Temple.
Lama	Tibetan Priest.
Lamasery	Tibetan Monastery.
Purdah	Cloistered.
Serai	Stable yard for travelers and their beasts.
Topi	Pith helmet.
Yak	Tibetan beast of burden.

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